

Lebanon, Syria prepare summit meeting on Israeli withdrawal offer

BEIRUT (AFP) — Syria and Lebanon are to hold a summit today to discuss Israel's offer to withdraw from south Lebanon, amid reports Damascus is considering the Israeli move in return for the re-start of its own peace talks with the Jewish state.

The London-based Al Hayat newspaper said Friday that Syria, which dominates political affairs in Lebanon, may be prepared to allow Israel to withdraw from south Lebanon before an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Syria has always insisted in the past Israel must agree a joint peace treaty with Lebanon and Syria that includes the return of the Golan plateau, which Israel occupied in 1967.

Al Hayat, quoting

"sources close to Damascus," said Syria would approve an Israeli withdrawal backed by American and French guarantees if Israel resumed peace talks with Syria which have been frozen for two years.

The summit between Syrian President Hafez Assad and Lebanese counterpart Elias Hrawi comes 20 years to the day after Israel first invaded and occupied part of Lebanon.

It follows Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's offer on March 1 to withdraw Israeli troops from the buffer zone they occupy in south Lebanon in return for guarantees from the Lebanese government to ensure security on the Israeli-Lebanese border.

Rising troop losses in Israel's self-declared "secu-

rity zone" — a record 39 soldiers killed in 1997 and four more slain since the start of this year — have fuelled public calls in Israel for a quick withdrawal from the area.

While Israel's long-standing position has been that it would withdraw from south Lebanon in exchange for security guarantees along the border, it has in the past demanded both Lebanon and its Syrian patron sign on to any accord.

In the latest initiative, officials have referred only to Lebanese security guarantees, with no mention of Syria, the main power in Lebanon with 35,000 troops stationed on three-quarters of Lebanese territory.

Syria and Lebanon initially rejected Mr. Netanyahu's offer out of hand, but there

has been intense consultations between the two Arab states in recent days.

Diplomats say the Israeli offer has unnerved both countries, who are keen not to be painted as the "negative" party blocking hopes of peace.

There has also been mounting internal pressure to launch a diplomatic counter-offensive to the Israeli offer, notably from Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of the Hizbollah which spearheads the guerrilla war against Israeli troops in south Lebanon.

Sheikh Nasrallah said it was important "that Lebanon does not appear as the party which is refusing a withdrawal and the implementation of international resolutions."

Palestinian police release two human rights workers

RAMALLAH (AFP) — Palestinian police released two activists from a Palestinian human rights organisation after holding them for several hours, the organisation said Friday.

Shawqi Al Eisa, editor of "People's Rights," and another activist, Samih Muhsen, were kept at police headquarters in Ramallah for questioning for about 10 hours on Thursday, said the Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the

Environment.

The two men, who had been called in to speak to police from the society's office in Arab east Jerusalem, were allowed to leave in the evening, a spokesman for the group said.

"They were asked about the last issue of People's Rights, which had articles on the closure of television stations and on the death of a Palestinian while held in a Palestinian jail," said the

spokesman.

Police in Ramallah confirmed that the two men had been called in for questioning, but would not give the reasons.

The articles in the magazine, published by the society, dealt with the closure of the stations for broadcasting pro-Iraqi demonstrations and the death of Nasser Al Hurub, whom police and coroners said committed suicide in a jail cell in February.

Palestinians say U.S. peace efforts insufficient

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian officials said Thursday that mediation by the United States was not enough to revive deadlocked negotiations with Israel and called on Europe to take a greater role.

"American efforts are no longer enough to save the peace process. We see the need for the European Union to coordinate efforts with the United States," said Nabil Abu Rudeina, a top aide to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

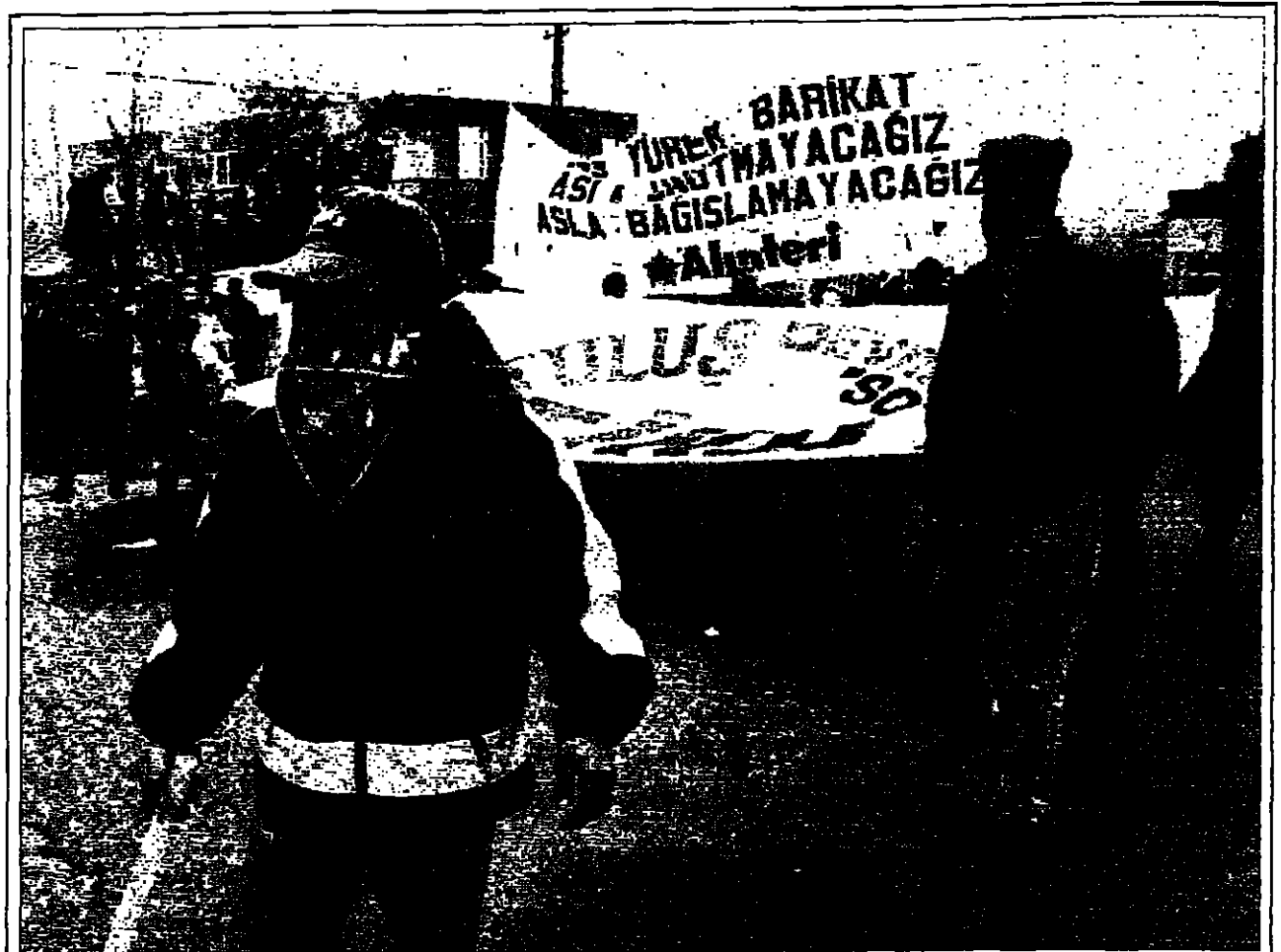
Mr. Arafat received letters Thursday from U.S. Secretary Madeleine Albright, French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine and Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro regarding efforts to revive negotiations, the official Palestinian news agency Wafa reported.

"American efforts have brought no results. The Americans promised Arafat to put forward an initiative, but they have stepped back and now say they will only present ideas. We are still waiting for these ideas," Mr. Abu Rudeina told AFP.

"If there is not a serious European-American movement to save the peace process, the region will come into a real political crisis. There is no peace or security unless the Palestinians get their rights," he said.

The United States threatened earlier this year to introduce its own proposal to break the year-long deadlock in the peace process after Israel and the Palestinians failed to reach agreement on a long overdue Israeli troop pullback from the West Bank.

But Washington's mediation in the peace process has slackened off since the Iraq weapons crisis.



PROTESTERS MARK THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF FATAL RIOTS: Masked far-leftist militants holding sticks and sticks Thursday march through the main street in Istanbul's Gazi neighbourhood as thousands of protesters attended the third anniversary of fatal riots in an impoverished district of Istanbul. Some 7,000 people, mostly from far leftist and pro-Kurdish groups, marched to commemorate the killing of at least 17 people in the disturbances in 1995 (Reuters photo)

West Bank shooting dampens hopes of new talks

By Elias M. Zamaniri
Special to the Jordan Times

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — Minutes before the deadly shooting near Hebron on Tuesday, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during their meeting in Tel Aviv that time is running out and that something has to be done because "everything is stuck."

The Crown Prince expressed his deep concern because "the situation is not good and because there could be an explosion at any moment." It did not take long to prove the Prince's warning right. The telephone rang and Mr. Netanyahu received the first report on the shooting in which Israeli troops shot dead three Palestinian workers who were heading back to their home town of Dura in the Hebron district after a long day of labour in Israel.

According to Israeli

sources just before the report on the shooting, the Crown Prince was explaining to Mr. Netanyahu how prepared Palestinian President Yasser Arafat was to meet with the Israeli prime minister, "provided such a summit is not merely to pass time but rather to make progress."

But the glimmer of hope soon evaporated to be replaced with clouds of pessimism. Palestinian sources said a summit meeting between Arafat and Netanyahu was not possible after the shooting, because the incident put them back to square one.

In the joint press conference, Prince Hassan openly said his visit to Tel Aviv was not that of a messenger bringing letters from Arafat to Netanyahu or vice versa. But his meeting with Mr. Netanyahu and the day before with Mr. Arafat strengthened the supposition by many Palestinians that Jordan is still playing a pivotal role in pushing the

peace process forward out of the present muddy stalemate.

"We are very much relieved at the level of Jordanian involvement in the process. We know that Jordan has its own differences with Israel, mainly in the aftermath of the Mithaal affair, but still Jordanian officials seem to be determined to do their best to help the PNA," a Palestinian official told the Jordan Times Wednesday in Ramallah.

Jordan played a major role in bringing Israel to sign the Hebron Agreement, which was the first and last agreement the current Israeli government signed with the Palestinian National Authority. Since then, the Palestinian official noted, nothing has moved forward.

The Palestinian official ruled out a new agreement on Israeli redeployment in the West Bank despite Crown Prince Hassan's statement that 1998 will be the year of the implementation of Israeli redeploy-

ments.

The reason, according to the Palestinian official, is Mr. Netanyahu's weakness and unwillingness to accept the concept of the Oslo accords. He said Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing coalition government, mainly after the resignation a few months ago of Foreign Minister David Levy, makes it almost impossible for him to implement the three phases of troop redeployment in the West Bank.

"Let us not forget that the problem we face in this context is not how influential is the Jordanian role, or, for this matter, the role of any other party, but how prepared the Israeli government is to honour its commitments," he said. But Jordan's influence is still welcomed and Palestinian circles do not hide their hopes that in his upcoming visit to the U.S., His Majesty King Hussein will bring up the need for Israel to implement its commitment to the interim agreements.

Turkish army kills 30 Kurdish rebels

ANKARA (AFP) — The Turkish army killed 30 Kurdish separatist rebels as part of ongoing operations to suppress the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), authorities controlling the offensive said Friday.

Two soldiers were killed in the fighting, which occurred in the regions of Sirnak, on the frontier between Syria and Iraq, Diyarbakir in the southeast and Tunceli and Bingol in

the east, said the authorities in Diyarbakir.

The news agency Anatolia, quoting the authorities, statement, said no time or date had been given for the clashes.

The death toll takes to 70 the number of PKK soldiers killed by the Turkish army over the past week.

Anatolia reported on Monday that 40 PKK fighters had been killed in clashes with the army in the troubled southeast.

The PKK has been fighting since 1984 for an independent Kurdish state in the southeast of Turkey, where the population is mainly Kurd. The state would be on the borders of Syria, Iran and Iraq.

Over 29,000 people have been killed in the years of clashes between the PKK rebels and Turkish forces, according to a toll announced in February by the head of the Diyarbakir authorities, Aydin Aslan.

Iranian FM to visit Saudi Arabia Saturday with Khatami's message

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi is due to pay a one-day visit to Saudi Arabia on Saturday, carrying a message from President Mohammad Khatami to Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz, Iran's official news agency IRNA reported Friday.

Mr. Kharazi will hold talks with Prince Abdullah on bilateral and regional issues as well

as the latest developments in the Muslim World, it said.

He will then fly to Qatar to attend the 25th ministerial session of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to be held in Doha on March 15-19.

The conference will take up the resolutions passed during an OIC summit in Tehran last December. Iran presently chairs the OIC

and Qatar will hold its next summit.

Relations have considerably warmed between Tehran and Riyadh since President Khatami took office in August.

Former Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani last week concluded a 10-day visit to Saudi Arabia, during which he held talks with Prince Abdullah and King Fahd.

Joint Jordanian-Libyan meeting set for May

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Joint Jordanian-Libyan Higher Committee is scheduled to convene in Tripoli in May to conclude nine agreements on preventing double taxation and cooperating in fields related to transport, vocational training, social concerns, agriculture, maritime operations, fishing and livestock.

The announcement was made by Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Hani

Mulki following several days of meetings by a joint committee held in preparation for the May meeting.

The meeting in Amman, which was co-chaired by Dr. Mulki and Suleiman Ghammari, the Libyan minister of health and social security, ended Thursday with the conclusion of agreements on cooperation in a number of fields.

Dr. Mulki said the two countries will cooperate in

pharmaceuticals and health matters, including treating Libyan nationals in Jordanian hospitals. Jordan and Libya will also encourage and guarantee joint investments in either country, he added.

Mr. Ghammari, who earlier met with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and other officials, described the accords and the May meeting as major milestones toward the integration of Jordan and

Libya.

Meanwhile, the Joint Jordanian-Libyan Business Council signed an agreement Thursday to promote commercial, industrial, and agricultural cooperation. The agreement was signed by Amman Chamber of Commerce President Haidar Murad and Amman Chamber of Industry President Khalidoun Abu Hassan and their Libyan counterpart Mohammad Atiyeh Al Mansouri.

JORDAN TELEVISION Tel. 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
16:10	Cartoon — Sandokan
16:30	French Programmes
18:00	Square One TV
18:30	Drama — Neighbours
19:00	Le Journal
19:15	French Programme
19:30	L'oeuf de Colomb
19:35	News headlines
19:35	Quiz Show — You Bet Your Life
20:00	Cinema: Cinema
20:30	Prison
21:10	Drama — Sirens
22:00	News in English
22:30	Feature film: "No Great Love"
23:59	Comedy — "The Respected Family"
00:30	End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:27	Fajr
05:44	(Sunrise) Duha
11:45	Dhuhr
15:08	Asr
17:46	Maghreb
19:03	Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366
Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811
St. Aftan Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751
Amman International Church Tel. 865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4623541
Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church 771331

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Temperatures are expected to rise slightly, skies sunny to partly cloudy, winds north-westerly to northeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be warm, skies sunny to partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman05/18
Aqaba13/25
Deserts04/20
Jordan Valley13/24

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 15 Aqaba 24 Humidity readings: Amman 54 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Khalil Al Tushuq	357253
Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi	893542
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim	830432
Dr. Bahjat Bader	832642

Firas pharmacy	5661912
Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asena pharmacy	4637055
Natronkh pharmacy	4623672
Al Salam pharmacy	5661101
Yacoub pharmacy	4644945
Shmeisani pharmacy	4637660
Najib pharmacy	847632
IRIBD:	
Dr. Ahmad Qanu	281484
Al Quds pharmacy	(—)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Tareq Hijawi	985445
Khalifeh pharmacy	985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	4637111
Civil Defence Department	5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue	4630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police 192	4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade	4617101
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Dept.	4630321
Hotel Complaints	5605800
Price Complaints	5661176
Water & Sewage Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (direction assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs	4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs	5661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	5680100
J. Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power Co.	4636381
RJ Flight Information	44-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport	44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:	
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery	5921199
The Islamic	5666131/7
Hussein Medical Centre Tel.	836813, 856856
Luzmila	4630195
Khalidi Maternity	4644281/6
Akileh Maternity	4643441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	4642362
Malhas, J. Amman	4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani	5607071
Shmeisani Hospital	5669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Muasher Hospital	5667227/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali	5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen	777101/3
Al-Bashir	775111/26

Army, Marka	891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital	562240/50
Amal Hospital	5674155

ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital	(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital	(09)990990

IRIBD:	
Princess Basma Hospital	(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital	(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital	(02)247100

AQABA:	
Princess Haya Hospital	(03)314111

Pioneering rights work increasing recognition of International Women's Day — Princess Basma

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — International Women's Day is starting to receive greater recognition due to the pioneering work of organisations such as the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the other members of the U.N. family, HRH Princess Basma said Wednesday.

Princess Basma was speaking at a reception held by UNIFEM and other U.N. organisations to mark International Women's Day.

"We come together today not just to celebrate our achievements. We honour the dignity and effort of each woman, wife, mother, sister, friend, activist, each one who has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of women, their families and communities," said Princess Basma, who is also UNIFEM's goodwill ambassador.

She talked about the change in terms of women advancement, saying that the urgency of our time often demands unreasonably quick results, but that the pressure for rapid change must also be tempered with an understanding of the climate and culture within which change is

championed.

"While it is useful to envision large-scale impactful change, for instance in terms of national policy and global strategies, it is also practical to see the merits of incremental change at local levels," she said.

The Princess also encouraged women's advancement and change through working on firm foundations and step by step approaches from the grassroots level up, as well as from the policy level down.

She emphasised the need to encourage in-depth research and information collection and exchange of comprehensive data and more efficiency in all areas related to women.

"If we wish to optimise our delivery, we must become more efficient and effective in our work practices. Only then can we be assured of impacting positively, rather than negatively, on the lives of women, especially those who are the most disadvantaged in our society," she said.

Princess Basma referred to last November's Parliamentary elections, in which seventeen women candidates, including Toujan Faisal, Jordan's first and only woman member of Parliament, faced over 500

men and failed to win a single seat.

Despite the disappointing results, "we have not lost our determination. We are moving forward on the basis of lessons learned," she said.

Princess Basma expressed her appreciation for UNIFEM's programmes in Jordan and abroad, saying that they will be instrumental in preparing women for the challenges of the next century.

In his address to the meeting, Jorgen Lissner, UNDP Resident Representative in Jordan, said Women's Day offers a precious opportunity to celebrate the progress made so far and to reflect on the problems encountered in the continuous effort to advance the cause of women in society.

He added that everyone loses a part of their humanity whenever women are imprisoned in prejudice or held back from developing their full potential.

He also underlined the need for a more rights-based approach to development.

"The rights of women to realise their full potential in life cannot and should not depend on the benevolence of others. Women should not be made to feel grateful

for what is inherently theirs to begin with. They should enjoy their rights as an entitlement that is inseparable from their humanity."

The ceremony included remarks by Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, UNIFEM Regional Programme Advisor and the launching of a book entitled "Changing Words into Actions, The Arab Woman: Beijing and Beyond," by Lamis Nasser.

The book provides an overview of the current status of Arab women and the principle issues facing them, such as legislation, national constitutions, education rights, work and health rights, and nationality laws.

It also discusses the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 and the areas of critical concern identified on the Platform of Action. It also focuses on Arab women's participation and the lessons acquired from the conference, such as the need for cooperation and coordination between Arab governmental and non-governmental delegations, the importance of serious preparations for the future, and the importance of training in the development of conference participation skills.

Regent calls for 'code of conduct' for Arab intellectuals, continued dialogue

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, has urged Arab intellectuals to continue their dialogue despite the obstacles in their path and to take the opinions of others into consideration.

The Regent, who was addressing the final session of the meeting by the Arab Peace and Solidarity Organisation on Thursday, called for a unified "code of conduct" for Arab intellectuals that would organise and govern their differences through continuous dialogue.

The Prince, who was addressing delegates from eight Arab states, voiced hope that a non-governmental, multi-national Muslim or Arab organisation would be established to solve health, poverty, culture and communication problems

and intensify inter-state cooperation.

In this regard, Prince Hassan noted the Islamic project to combat terrorism, which was adopted by the Organisation of Islamic Conference during its meeting in Iran last year.

The Prince reiterated Jordan's firm stand on the Palestinians realising their full rights on their national soil, adding that the coming months will witness a rapprochement in Arab-Israeli peacemaking.

Issa Mdanat, head of Jordan's chapter of the organisation, expressed his appreciation for the Crown Prince for his patronage the two-day meeting.

Mr. Mdanat told the Jordan Times that meeting called for an urgent Arab summit to discuss ways strengthening Arab solidarity and ensuring reconciliation between Arab states.

The meeting also called for the U.S. and Britain to

withdraw their troops from the Gulf that have been stationed there since the crisis between Iraq and the United Nations over the activities of the U.N. arms inspections teams in Baghdad.

"These troops are a threat to Iraq and should be pulled out of the region to reduce tension," said Mr. Mdanat, a veteran leftist leader in the Kingdom.

He said the delegates expressed their relief over the way the deadlock between Iraq and the U.N. was resolved and called for the world organisation to lift the economic sanctions against Iraq and reduce the suffering of its people.

Mr. Mdanat said the delegates decided to hold a special session in the Palestinian self-rule areas in November "as a sign of solidarity with the Palestinian people." The meeting coincided with the 50th anniversary of the divi-

sion of Palestine.

The meeting also called for Israeli government to honour the agreements it has signed with Palestinians to bring the peace process back on track.

"The conference denounced the Israeli policy of terrorism, especially the demolition of houses, mass arrests and land confiscation, and called for putting an end to these measures," Mr. Mdanat said.

The meeting, which was opened Wednesday, also called for halting normalisation of ties with Israel and ending "any sort of cooperation" with Tel Aviv.

The delegates also urged Turkey to reconsider its "military cooperation" with Israel and to strengthen its ties with Arab and Muslim states instead.

The delegates represented chapters of the organisation in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan, Yemen, Egypt and Jordan.

U.K. rejects sanctions, force to ensure Israeli compliance with U.N. resolutions — ambassador

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — British Ambassador to Jordan Christopher Battiscombe has said his country rejects the use of sanctions and military threats against Israel to force the Jewish state to comply with U.N. resolutions.

Speaking at a press conference Thursday, Mr. Battiscombe said his country prefers political pressure by the U.S. and the European Union on Tel Aviv to withdraw from Arab lands occupied since 1967.

"I do not think that the threat of sanctions in the case of Israel would be appropriate," the ambassador said. "I do not think that it would be possible to get an agreement either in Europe or the United States to take action of that kind."

"You cannot do that simply by economic pressure or holding a gun to someone's head," he added.

The ambassador was responding to charges by several Arab states that the U.N., the U.S. and Europe were adopting double standards in dealing with Middle East problems.

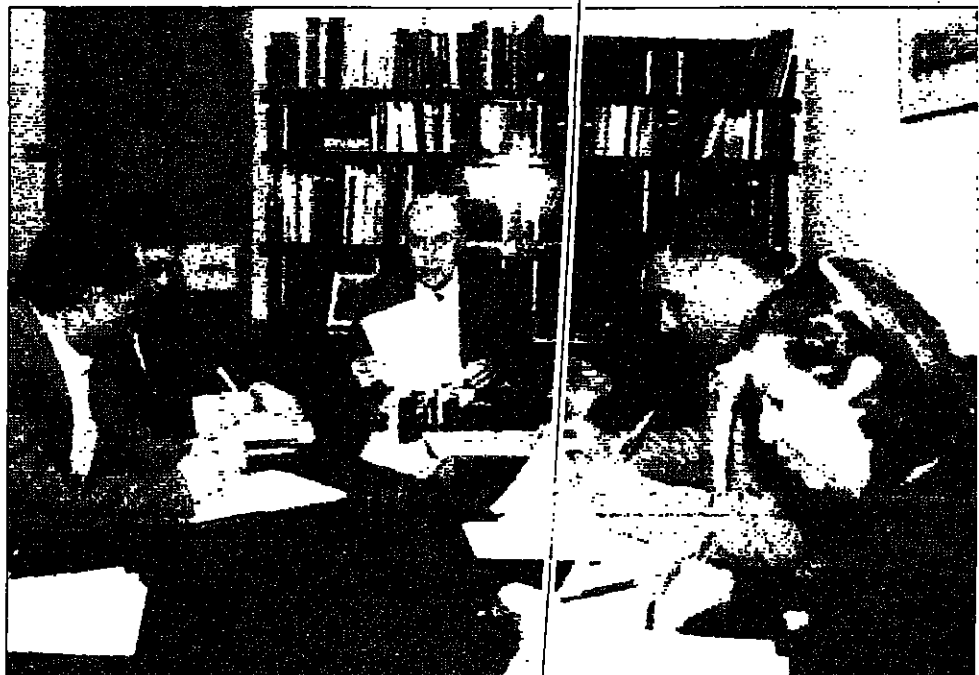
This accusation followed the recent deadlock between the U.S. and Iraq over the activities of arms inspectors in Iraq. Washington and London spearheaded a campaign to use military force if needed against Baghdad.

Many Arab states have said the same tactic should be used against Israel, which until now has refused to implement U.N. resolutions.

Mr. Battiscombe said the use of military threats and sanctions were necessary to ensure compliance with U.N. resolutions imposed on Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

"The two issues are not precisely the same. We do believe that Israel should comply with U.N. resolutions... and we intend to use political pressure," the ambassador said.

Mr. Battiscombe said the present time was not appropriate to launch a dialogue between London and Baghdad but did not rule out a future dialogue.



British Ambassador to Jordan Christopher Battiscombe talks to reporters Thursday during a press conference. The ambassador ruled out any use of force or sanctions on the part of his country to ensure Israeli compliance with U.N. resolutions. (Photo by Yousef Allan)

"We do not see a reason at the moment to increase our contacts with Iraq. We think that this [issue] is something to be worked out between the U.N. and the Iraqi regime," he said.

"We have on occasion had contacts with Iraq. We had contacts at the United Nations through [British and Iraqi] ambassadors there," he said.

"Our ambassador to the U.N. has on occasion seen [Iraqi deputy prime minister] Tariq Aziz," said the ambassador, who started his work in Amman last year.

He said the military threats against Iraq were not aimed at toppling Iraqi President Saddam Hussein but rather at making Iraq implement the U.N. resolutions.

"We think that the choice of regime for Iraq is a matter for the Iraqi people. We may have our views about the Iraqi regime but it is not a matter for us to decide," he said.

"We have made it very clear that if and when Iraq cooperates with the U.N. and complies with its resolutions, then we can consider the question of lifting sanctions," the British diplomat said.

Mr. Battiscombe said his country and the U.S. have

the authority to strike Iraq if it blocks the activities of the U.N.

"Yes, we have the authority if necessary to use force without consultation with the Security Council. But that is not to say that we will not consult with the Security Council," Mr. Battiscombe said.

"It would depend very much on the situation. For example, if there was an attack on an aircraft which was supervising the no-fly zone, we would retaliate with force without asking the Security Council," he said.

"It would depend on the circumstances. But if you ask about the actual legal position, we think that we have the authority already," the ambassador said.

He said Britain hopes that Mr. Hussein understands that the way to resolve problems with the U.N. is through cooperation and not through confrontation.

But, "if they have not understood that and think that somehow they are going to win through confrontation, then the crisis will be back at some point," Mr. Battiscombe said.

He declined to set a date for the withdrawal of British forces, saying that his country "wants to see

that Iraq is really complying with the new agreement before we withdraw our forces."

The ambassador announced that British Foreign Minister Robin Cook will arrive here on Monday as part of a regional tour that will also take him to Egypt, Palestine, Israel, Syria and Lebanon.

"Mr. Cook will bring some ideas of our own to try and get the process moving again."

During his visit, Mr. Battiscombe said, the British foreign minister will urge all concerned parties to honour existing agreement, push for a substantial Israeli redeployment, a halt to all expansion of settlements, and the opening of Gaza sea and airports, and pave the way for the resumption of talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

Mr. Battiscombe said British Prime Minister Tony Blair might visit the Middle East in April, but it was not clear whether Jordan will be on his itinerary.

The ambassador stated that British and Jordanian forces may hold joint manoeuvres this year as part of military cooperation between the two countries. The date of these exercises has not been fixed.

Cardiac monitoring company announces plans for in-flight service

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Heartbeat, Jordan's telephonic cardiac monitoring service, has announced plans to extend its service to all Royal Jordanian (RJ) passengers who might suffer from in-flight heart problems.

The private telemedicine company, launched in 1996, said it signed a preliminary agreement with RJ in November to take to the sky.

"We hope to begin operating the service by May," Heartbeat General Manager Mohammad Amir told the Jordan Times.

Under the deal, a Heartbeat cardiac care kit will be installed on all RJ flights to aid any passenger who might have a heart-related problem.

The device will also help pilots decide on whether they should make an emergency landing to help the patient.

"Each kit will include a cardiac telemonitoring device, a defibrillator, an emergency medication kit and an electronic blood pressure device," said Khalil Zayadin, one of Heartbeat's founders.

Heartbeat, the first such agency in the Arab World, will operate in the sky exactly as it functions on the ground, he explained.

"When a patient experiences chest pains, the telemonitoring device will run a recording of the heart's electrical activity (EKG)," Dr. Zayadin told the Jordan Times.

"The portable EKG device converts the electrical impulses into waves. Once the EKG recording is taken, the pilot can dispatch an emergency phone call to Heartbeat's receiving station in Jordan," he said.

"Sound signals are then transmitted via telephone to Heartbeat's computers in the form of graphs at the receiving station on the ground," he added.

"Once the EKG is evaluated by a specialist, who is on call 24 hours a day, diagnosis and necessary treatment is recommended," Dr. Zayadin said.

The whole process should not take more than ten minutes.

"If the EKG confirms cardiac arrest, a defibrillator is used to save the patient's life," he said.

Some international airlines already have defibrillators on board, but many doctors agree that most in-flight medical services for potential heart problems are not adequate.

According to Dr. Zayadin, global statistics indicate that over 85 per cent of chest pain is

not related to cardiac problems.

"With the help of the Heartbeat in-flight kit, the captain of the plane can determine the seriousness of a patient's situation before he diverts the aircraft from its flight for an emergency, which may be nothing more than indigestion or gas," he said.

Diverting a flight for such potential emergencies could cost the airline up to \$25,000. "Travel involves a lot of stress, business stress, family tragedy and anxiety," said Dr. Zayadin.

"In addition, spending a long time immobile at high altitudes and consuming heavy meals and alcohol all lead to a prime setting for blood clots to form," he stressed.

Heart disease remains a common cause of death in Jordan, official statistics show.

Heartbeat receives approximately 50 telephone calls a day from all over the Kingdom, said Mr. Amir.

Heartbeat has approached Kuwait Airlines to run a similar service, he added. Emirates, the airline of the United Arab Emirates of Dubai, has also contacted the Amman-based company to "install our service on board," Mr. Amir said.

Heartbeat has received phone calls from Jordanian subscribers travelling in countries as far as Britain and Dubai, "half of which were pathological," he added.

"In 1997, Heartbeat received 4,000 telephone calls, 254 of which had to be referred for immediate treatment," he added.

Heartbeat's service, which covers all parts of Jordan, also runs a centre in the West Bank.

"Continuous [Israeli-imposed] closures in the West Bank make it difficult for patients experiencing heart pain to receive medical consultation," said Mr. Amir.

"Heartbeat has proven to be an effective means of diagnosis there."

A recent Heartbeat survey found out that general practitioners working in remote areas of Jordan benefited most from this telemedical service.

"These doctors do not have the proper equipment in their clinics to conduct EKGs," said Dr. Zayadin.

Consequently, Heartbeat embarked on a pilot study in Madaba to decrease unnecessary referrals and costs shouldered by the Ministry of Health and Medical Care.

"This is a viable service...since Jordan is currently spending 7.9 per cent of its GDP on health care, more than most middle-income Western industrial nations," he concluded.

Nationwide polio vaccination campaign begins today

AMMAN (J.T.) — A nationwide polio immunisation campaign begins today as part of overall efforts to eliminate the disease from Jordan by the year 2000, according to Ministry of Health and Medical Care officials.

In a statement issued Friday, the ministry said the campaign, which is being financed by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Jordanian Rotary and Lions clubs, will provide immunisations free of charge to all children below the age of five.

Ministry officials said the five-day campaign will be conducted in two stages. Children will be given an oral vaccination to be followed by a second dose four weeks later.

The vaccine is available in all Ministry of Health centres, women and child care centres, government hospitals, Royal Medical Services centres, clinics run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the Jordan University Hospital and private clinics, according to the ministry.

These centres will be open from eight in the morning until four in the afternoon and no identity cards or other documents are required, the statement said.

Haider Eloum, the head of the national vaccination campaign at the ministry, estimated that 700,000 children are eligible for immunisations.

Calling on the public to cooperate with the ministry to ensure the success of the campaign, Dr. Eloum said no cases of polio have been reported in Jordan since 1994, but the campaign is needed until at least the year 2000 to guarantee that the disease will not recur.

what's going on

FILM

* Cuban film "Survivors" (with subtitles in English) at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman on Sunday, March 15 at 5:00 p.m.

LA FRANCOPHONIE WEEK

* Lecture: "Francophonie: Language and Culture" by Lebanese poet Salah Stétié at the City Hall, Amman Municipality, Ras Al 'Am at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Paintings by Saleh Abir Shindi at Haladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537599), until March 19.

* Works by Sana Kayyali at Orient Gallery, Shmeisani (Tel. 5681303/4), until March 26. (Proceeds will go to Al-Quds Al Sharif Defending Association).

* Works by Jordanian artist Yousef Badrawi at Darat Al-Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 9. (Tel. 4643251/2). Also displaying a private collection of Mamdouh Bisharat entitled "A Vision, An Identity" and works by contemporary Arab artists — "The New Collection."

Annual press association meeting opens in two weeks

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Press Association (JPA) Friday announced that their annual meeting will convene on March 27 to study the final accounts for 1997, endorse the 1998 fiscal budget, and review the association's administrative and financial reports.

According to the announcement, the general assembly, which groups 367 registered journalists,

will discuss a proposal to increase the monthly JD10 deduction from journalists' salaries to JD15 as part of raising the retirement pension from JD150 per month to JD200.

Last January, the JPA increased the monthly pension from JD100 to JD150.

According to Fakhri Abu Hamdeh, JPA administrative director, 12 journalists are expected to retire this

year upon reaching the age of 65, but he noted they may postpone retirement and continue working for as long as they wish.

In order to receive a full pension, a journalist must have served as a member for 25 years or more, he said. If a journalist retires before completing the minimum number of years, he or she will receive a pension proportionate to the

number of years in which premiums were paid.

Also during the meeting, the general assembly will discuss proposals to amend the present JPA health insurance plan, Mr. Abu Hamdeh said.

Under article 24 of the JPA law, a member cannot vote on any general assembly decision unless he or she has paid all dues at least

one week before the assembly's meeting date.

Currently, JPA members must pay JD30 in membership fees upon joining the association and the monthly JD10 pension premium.

Should there be no quorum on March 27, the general assembly will reconvene on April 3 regardless of the number of journalists in attendance to discuss the topics on the agenda.

EU foreign ministers talk bans on Yugoslavia over Kosovo

EDINBURGH, Scotland (AFP) — EU foreign ministers met in Edinburgh Friday for an informal two-day conference to agree a strategy of fresh trade sanctions and an arms embargo against Yugoslavia over the crisis in Kosovo.

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said Thursday he was confident the ministers would back measures agreed in London Monday by the six-nation contact group on the Balkans.

The group, made up of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the U.S., agreed Monday to seek a U.N. embargo on the sale of arms and national bans on the export of military equipment to Yugoslavia, which comprises Serbia and Montenegro.

The measures are to force Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to end his security forces' crackdown on separatist ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

Around 80 Albanians have been killed in the

province in the south of Yugoslavia as a result of security force action since the beginning of the month. Ethnic Albanians make up 92 per cent of Kosovo's population.

The contact group also threatened to freeze Belgrade's foreign assets, suspend export credits and other economic aid and slap a visa ban on officials and ministers unless Mr. Milosevic halted the repression within 10 days and opened a "genuine political process" with Kosovo representatives.

The EU conference is the second forum in which Mr. Cook is seeking support for punitive sanctions against Belgrade.

Thursday at the inaugural meeting of the 26-nation European Conference in London, heads of government also backed the contact group plan.

Kosovo Albanian leaders have refused to start talks with delegations from Belgrade without international mediation, a demand Belgrade has rejected.

Friday Kosovo Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova said again that he would boycott talks proposed by Serbian officials and called for Western powers, especially the United States and the European Union to "support the aspiration of people in Kosovo for democracy and independence."

Monday the contact group supported only "enhanced autonomy" for the Kosovo, not full independence.

The province held autonomous status until 1989 when Mr. Milosevic, then Serbian president, revoked it, dissolved Kosovo's assembly and government and returned control over police, courts, civil defence and official appointments to Serbia.

Although U.N. sanctions imposed on Yugoslavia during the Balkan conflicts were lifted in 1996, the United States and the European Union have maintained embargoes.

Washington has blocked Belgrade's access to World Bank and International

Monetary Fund (IMF).

The European Union meanwhile maintained an arms embargo ordered in February 1996 and has made a resumption of normal economic relations conditional on democratic progress, full implementation of the Dayton accords, enhanced autonomy for Kosovo and improved economic ties with neighbours.

Last November, the EU ruled that there had been insufficient progress by Belgrade and renewed preferential trade provisions for Belgrade's neighbours, Bosnia and Croatia.

Both the United States and the European Union have refused to appoint ambassadors to Belgrade and only maintain diplomatic links through charges d'affaires.

Aside from Kosovo, the EU foreign ministers will also discuss the deadlocked Middle East peace process, relations with Iran, the financial downturn in the Far East and the situation in Iraq.



A pupil of the St. Antonius girls school hangs a protest banner on a school staircase after Hong Kong authorities ruled that the school could no longer teach through the medium of English. The government ruled on an appeal by 20 schools which were seeking to continue English-medium education. Only 14 of the schools won approval, while six failed (Reuters photo)

More Hong Kong schools win right to teach in English

HONG KONG (AFP) — Fourteen Hong Kong schools Friday won the right to hold lessons in English after an appeals committee overturned a directive ordering them to teach in Chinese.

The schools won appeals against a government order making Chinese the main language of instruction in all schools when the new academic year begins in September.

Six schools had their requests denied by the committee, chaired by a city university professor.

Last year the government allowed 100 schools an exemption to the order permitting them to continue teaching in English. The appeals victories mean only

10 schools will have to change from English to Chinese tuition next September, education officials said.

Some parents in Hong Kong have voiced fears that their children stand a better chance of lucrative careers with international companies if they are schooled in English rather than their native Cantonese dialect.

In a bid to head off the anxiety, the government has pledged to spend an extra 67 million Hong Kong dollars (\$8.7 million) to improve English language tuition in Chinese-speaking schools.

Secretary for Administration Joseph Wong said Friday the government was determined to

strengthen students' skills in both English and Chinese.

However, he said students who speak Chinese as their native tongue would benefit from lessons in Chinese.

"Research worldwide and in Hong Kong has shown that students generally learn better through their mother-tongue."

"They will be able to understand better what is taught, analyse problems, express views, develop an inquisitive mind and cultivate critical thinking."

He said that the policy was initiated in 1994, three years before Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule after more than a century and a half as a British colony.

Cambodia rejects proposal for U.N. monitoring of ceasefire

MANILA (AFP) — Cambodia has rejected an ASEAN proposal for the United Nations to monitor a ceasefire in the strife-torn nation, Philippine Foreign Undersecretary Lauro Baja said Friday.

Mr. Baja met with Cambodian Foreign Minister and co-Premier Ung Huot earlier this week as an envoy of the ASEAN "troika" tasked to mediate the Cambodian war-torn factions.

"He (Ung Huot) does not see any practical utility to the proposal because he does not expect representatives to go to the war zone and jungles," Mr. Baja told reporters when asked if Cambodia agreed to the ASEAN suggestion.

Asked if ASEAN would still pursue their proposal, Mr. Baja told reporters: "If one side rejects, what's the use of pursuing it?"

However, Philippine Foreign Secretary Domingo Siazon said "individual governments will keep moving on different levels to maintain the ceasefire" declared late February as part of a Japanese-brokered peace plan.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) earlier this month proposed U.N. help to monitor the truce declared by Cambodia strongman Hun Sen and forces loyal to ousted co-Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

Khmer Rouge clandestine radio said this week that fighting was still going on between rebel forces and government troops close to the border with Thailand.

Baja also said Ung Huot told him Phnom Penh plans to hold the elections as scheduled on July 26, but "regretted" that promised international financial aid has not been disbursed.

Ung Huot, who replaced the prince as first prime minister, informed Mr. Baja that Cambodia had opened a special account for international assistance "but not a single cent is entered."

ASEAN and an informal group called Friends of Cambodia, which includes Japan and major Western powers like the United States and the European Union, have met twice in the Philippines since Feb. 14 in an attempt to help resolve the tensions in Cambodia.

They have called for the return of Prince Ranariddh to the country and his participation in the elections.

They have also supported a Japanese compromise proposal for the prince to be tried on charges of weapons smuggling and collusion with the Khmer Rouge guerrillas and then pardoned by his father King Norodom Sihanouk to enable his return from exile in Thailand.

The group have said they want clear signals that Phnom Penh is committed to holding free and honest elections with the participation of the prince before releasing funds.

ASEAN and the Friends of Cambodia are to meet again in Bangkok on April 15.

Prince Ranariddh went into exile after his ouster by Second Prime Minister Hun Sen in bloody street battles in Phnom Penh in July 1997.

On March 4, he was tried in absentia and convicted of arms smuggling charges, earning a five-year jail term. He is expected to stand trial on March 17 on charges of collaborating with the extremist Khmer Rouge, blamed for the extermination of two million Cambodians in the 1970s. He has denied all charges.

"Technically, Prince Ranariddh has until May 6 to return to the country," Mr. Baja said, adding that if he returned before being pardoned "he will be arrested."

The Filipino diplomat said the foreign ministers of Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand — which comprise the ASEAN troika — may be able to meet with King Sihanouk, currently in Beijing, only after April 17 in Phnom Penh.

Chinese police crack down on election-related dissent

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese police have arrested one political activist and questioned several others over attempts to raise their voices on leadership decisions now being taken here, a Hong Kong-based dissident organisation said Friday.

Police in eastern Huzhou city picked up Mao Guoliang from his home at 10:00 a.m. (0200 GMT) Friday, the Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China said in a faxed statement.

It is the third time he has been detained since signing a petition last month calling Premier Li Peng a murderer and unfit for any new office because of his alleged leading role in the June 4, 1989 Tiananmen massacre.

The National People's Congress (NPC), or parliament — which is now holding its annual meeting in Beijing — is expected to elect Mr. Li as its new chairman Monday. He will stand down as premier Tuesday, having served his constitutionally permitted two terms.

The centre also said that police around the country had taken action against at least six people who signed another petition urging the NPC to elect dissident Tong Zeng as China's president Monday, rather than the incumbent, Jiang Zemin.

Three signatories from eastern Shandong province, and three others from Beijing, Tianjin and Nanjing were questioned for several hours on March 5, it said.

The reports could not

immediately be confirmed. Mr. Li's new appointment and Mr. Jiang's reappointment by the NPC next week are largely formalities, with neither facing opposing candidates.

China's fourth-ranking leader, Li Ruihuan, Friday was re-elected by an 99.2 per cent majority as chairman of the government's top advisory body, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

But police appeared to be taking a few chances.

The centre said they grudge signatories of the pro-Tong petition on how many people were involved, whether they received outside help and whether the petition was linked to the democratic movement.

The petition was signed by nearly 200 laid-off workers around the country, Mr. Tong, 42, is best-known for his activism on behalf of "comfort women" abducted in occupied territory by the Japanese army during World War II to serve as sex slaves.

The open letter to the NPC said Mr. Li was not suitable to become China's legislator chief because he "had committed unforgivable crimes in the student movement of 1989."

"He has the blood of dead people on his hands," said the letter, one of the seven activists, all of whom were involved in the 1989 pro-democracy movement.

China has never revealed a death toll from the crackdown, but according to eyewitness accounts, hundreds of unarmed demonstrators were killed when the troops

backed by tanks moved in to break up the protests.

Friday morning, meanwhile, a senior lawmaker professed ignorance that police actions effectively muzzle expressions of political dissent.

"It is provided for in the constitution that citizens have the right of speech, demonstration and assembly. If they have any complaint, they can surely air their ideas freely," NPC legislative affairs commission Vice Chairman Qiao Xiaoyang told a media briefing.

Over the past few weeks, several dissidents have been arrested for sending open letters to the NPC, which will close its plenary session on March 19.

Among those detained, Xu Shuiliang, Shen Liangqing, Lin Xinshu, Ma Lianggang and Yang Qinheng still have not been released.

At least seven other protesters, notably Miao Xike, have been arrested during the meeting as they tried to present petitions to the congress from Tiananmen Square — directly opposite the NPC's meeting-place, the Great Hall of the People.

The centre says veteran dissident Xu Wenli, one of the key figures in the 1978-79 "democracy wall" movement, has also had his phone cut off by police since Thursday.

Mr. Xu sent an open letter to the parliament calling on Beijing to ratify the U.N. Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which China signed in October.

Mad cow crisis cost Britain one billion pounds in a year

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's mad cow disease crisis which caused a world ban on British beef exports cost nearly £1 billion in the first year of the scare, a report said Friday.

The official study estimated that the net loss to the economy in the first 12 months after March 1996, when the government linked Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) to a new fatal human brain disease, was between £740 million (\$1.2 billion) and £980 million (\$1.6 billion).

Commissioned by the previous conservative government, the report however said the figure was substantially below earlier estimates, based on the 36 per cent fall in demand for British beef and beef products.

Job losses and the financial impact on the economy were also not as severe as predicted.

This was due to government subsidies and compensation totalling £1.5 billion (\$2.4 billion) and because wholesalers, retailers, consumers and manufacturers switched to other British meat products, leading to rises in output and employment elsewhere in the economy.

Regionally, the biggest losers were in Northern Ireland, followed by Scotland, and parts of northern and south west England.

In England, eastern counties and lowland areas, where pig and poultry farming is important, farmers actually gained.

The authors of the report commented that the main effect of the BSE crisis was to accelerate changes in the beef industry that was already under way due to falling beef demand, a rise in the pound and pressure to improve food hygiene.

But they warned that the future impact of BSE was likely to be "significantly greater" than the effects up to the middle of 1997.

Some consumers would never return to beef and beef products, they said, and pressure on prices and profit margins would remain.

French regional bodies set to swing left Sunday

PARIS (AFP) — Elections in mainland France's 22 regions next Sunday will be a litmus test of the eight-month-old Socialist-led government's popularity, as the left currently holds office in only two regions.

The regions are seen as the poor cousins in France's multi-layered and still extremely centralised administration, carrying less economic clout than the smaller departments or city councils.

But they are viewed as potentially vital in a new integrated Europe, where they will have to compete with powerful neighbouring regions, notably in Germany and Spain.

The following are key facts in the election, which polls predict will show a strong swing to the left.

Some 39 million voters are registered for the March 15 poll, with balloting scheduled between 8 a.m. (0700 GMT) until 6 p.m. or 8 p.m. in big cities.

The election is in one round on a proportional vote for a party list.

Estimates are due shortly after the close of voting but the definitive outcome will take several days.

This is because few outright majorities are expected and parties thus may be forced to haggle deals over the key post of president of the council — which carries executive and budgetary power. Presidents are to be elected by winning candidates on March 20.

Latest polls showed the Socialist-led coalition including Communists and Greens winning 40 per cent with the main-

stream conservative RPR and UDF trailing at 32 per cent. The far-right National Front was tipped to score 15-16 per cent of the vote, meaning it can be king-maker in the election of some presidents, along with other small parties.

Abstention in the first ever regional elections of 1986 was 22.1 per cent (turnout of 77.9) and 31.4 per cent (turnout 68.6) in 1992.

There are 22 regions in mainland France, including the Mediterranean island of Corsica, and four in overseas territories: Guadeloupe, French Guiana and Reunion Island.

The regions date back to 1982 as part of efforts to decentralise France.

Of the 22 main regions, the ruling Socialists only run Limousin in central France while their allies the Greens head the big Nord-Pas-de-Calais region. The remainder are held by the two mainstream conservative parties, the Rally for the Republic (RPR) and Union for French Democracy (UDF).

The last election for the six-year mandate was in 1992.

In mainland France, the regions range from the vast Ile-de-France — greater Paris — with a population of 11 million — to central Limousin with only 700,000.

Paris thus has 209 councillors' seats while Limousin has 43 councillors.

The biggest regions after Ile-de-France, accounting for one out of five French people, are Rhone-Alpes (main city Lyon), Provence-Alpes-Cotes d'Azur

(main city Marseille) and Nord-Pas-de-Calais (Lille).

The regions are responsible for local economic development, which accounts for almost two-thirds of their spending. They also fund public works such as ports and parks, social aid and education, notably secondary schools, which made almost 40 per cent of their budgets in 1994.

But in comparison with France's 95 smaller departments set up by the 1789 French Revolution, the regions remain the poor cousins. Departmental spending is threefold that of the regions in local spending was 9.2 per cent against 30.7 per cent for the departments and 60 per cent for local councils or municipalities.

The newest of France's territorial communities are seen however as key in future competition with other dynamic European regions. But financially, they have a long way to go. The Financial Times this month compared the budget of the second biggest region, Rhone-Alpes, as 1.1 billion euros to nine billion for Italy's Lombardy region and 30 billion for Germany's Baden-Wuerttemberg.

Regions raise revenue through property and job taxes, indirectly through driving licences and vehicle registration and via huge works contracts signed with the central government.

Nationally, the regions spent 1,323 francs (\$200) per inhabitant last year and had a total budget of 80 billion francs (\$13 billion).

13 confirmed dead in landslide in Pakistani Kashmir

MUZAFFARABAD, Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (AFP) — Thirteen people were killed when a landslide hit a village in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, officials said Friday, revising a higher toll given by them earlier.

A senior official said the bodies of the victims had been recovered from the mass of mud

and snow that buried two houses in Kaishian village, 110 kilometres southeast of here late Thursday as residents slept.

Earlier it was stated that 35 houses were demolished and 30 people were feared dead in the remote village, located at an altitude of 1,675 metres.

Officials said torrential rain

had caused havoc in recent days in the Pakistan-administered northern third of the state known as Azad Kashmir.

Weather experts said 90 millimetres of rain had fallen on Muzaaffarabad in 10 days while Kaishian had been blanketed by about one and a half metres of snow.

Italian cabinet rule s to oust mafia-linked minister

ROME (AFP) — The Italian government decided Friday to seek to remove Angelo Giorgianni, a junior minister at the interior ministry, from office over suspicion of collusion with the mafia.

"The council of ministers has unanimously decided to initiate the procedure for removing Senator Giorgianni from his post at the interior ministry," an official statement read.

Wednesday, Prime Minister Romano Prodi formally asked Mr. Giorgianni to resign, a request the minister refused to accept.

A similar request was also made by Mr. Giorgianni's boss at the

ministry, Giorgio Napolitano, and the founder of the junior minister's party, Lamberto Dini, who is also Italy's foreign minister.

Mr. Giorgianni, one of five undersecretaries at the interior ministry, has been under fire since his name appeared in a report by a parliamentary anti-mafia commission.

The commission suspected Mr. Giorgianni, a Sicilian, of having had improper meetings with a construction businessman linked to mafia figures in the port city of Messina, according to newspaper reports.

Mr. Giorgianni has denied all accusations against him and has refused to resign.

Dolly's sweater given to science

LONDON (AFP) — A sweater made from wool from Dolly, the first mammal to be cloned, was given to science Friday.

Featuring a design of two identical sheep happily grazing in a field, the sweater was handed over to London's Science Museum.

It is the first product to be made from Dolly, who was cloned by the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The Roslin Institute is now looking at how to develop its cloning technique to engineer sheep that produce AAT, a protein used in the treatment of cystic fibrosis.

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Listening
saves lives

WHETHER THE recent killing of three Palestinian workers by Israeli soldiers manning a security checkpoint near Hebron was intentional as the Palestinians insist or inadvertent as the Israelis claim is not the most important consideration for now. The real issue here is that human lives have been lost as a result of continued tension between the Israelis and the Palestinians and many more will be lost in the absence of real peace between the two peoples. As long as the search for a durable and just settlement for the Palestinian problem remains deadlocked, there will be occasions and flash-points around which death and suffering will be inflicted by one side against the other.

The European Union (EU) countries appear determined to intervene more effectively in the peace process. With London presiding over the EU, British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook is coming to the Middle East next week with a new initiative that calls for immediate and credible Israeli redeployments in the West Bank, effective cessation of all unilateral measures that would sabotage the ultimate objectives of peace in addition to resumption of peace talks on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

Unfortunately, however, Israel still rejects all outside help or offers of mediation to breathe new life into the stalled negotiations on the pretext that the immediate parties themselves should iron out their differences themselves. That is why Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seems determined to resist the European initiative just as he had fought the now-defunct U.S. intervention. The man simply prefers to be left alone to call the shots and dictate the shape, form and substance of the peace talks on all fronts.

But after so many agonising months, the Israeli government's preference for non-intervention in the negotiations has led to nowhere except, as we witnessed last week, to more killings and suffering. Unless the international community is allowed to pitch in the efforts to bridge the growing gap between Israel and the Palestinians, the rising tension between them could erupt into a more sustained cycle of violence and counter-violence. For the sake of both the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples, their leaderships, especially the Netanyahu government, need to listen to what EU has to say.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Aswaj's Rashid Hassan said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is determined to shed the blood of the Palestinians as is clear from his troops killing in cold blood of three Palestinian workers on Tuesday. Following each incident involving the murder of Palestinians, Netanyahu offers apologies to the Palestinian leadership but such apologies are part of his deception, said the writer. The killings of innocent people in the occupied Arab territories continue despite the peace accords and the agreements, something which clearly exposes the criminal nature of the Israeli rulers and their occupation forces, he added. Coupled with these crimes, he said, are Israel's continued demolition of Arab homes, confiscation of Arab lands and the siege on Arab towns and villages. The massacre committed by the Israeli forces in the Al Ibrahim Mosque against the worshippers, and the slaying of 19 Palestinian workers at Qarah at the hands of Zionist settlers are amongst the series of crimes which Israel has been committing in Palestine, noted the writer. Neither Netanyahu's apology nor his customary double talk can appease the wrath of the Arab people nor will the Palestinian resistance be subdued or end before the occupied lands are freed from the aggressors, said Hassan.

Al Dustour's Mohammad Mahasneh addressed Jordan's prompt and worldwide moves in connection with the Iraqi crisis and the deadlocked Middle East peace process. In the case of Iraq, Jordan had to move fast in order to ward off a military strike on Iraq because such a strike would have serious adverse effects on the Kingdom's security and national economy, Mahasneh said. Turning to Palestine, he said, Jordan realises too well that the failure of the peace process and the lack of a lasting and comprehensive Arab-Israeli settlement are certain to perpetuate tension that could lead to war. In advocating the idea of a direct dialogue between Baghdad and Washington, Jordan is not acting for either party but it is in fact trying to protect its own national interests, the writer pointed out. He said Jordan is not monopolising the mediation efforts as it has been alleged by some circles which claimed that the Kingdom left no room for Syria or Egypt or Saudi Arabia to make their own moves to defuse the crisis in the Gulf. The writer said the door is quite open for all Arab parties to follow Jordan's example.

Jordanian Perspective

Just going through the motions

By Dr. Musa Keilani

LAST WEEK'S killing of three Palestinians in the West Bank is the latest manifestation of the character of the new breed of Israelis, within the army and elsewhere. Their action is indicative of the same approach and elitist superiority complexes, backed of course by the government of the Jewish state, the Nazis held towards Jews, gypsies and anyone non-Aryan.

The Israeli press has been furiously trying to argue that the shooting at the Israeli checkpoint, Targumia, where Israeli soldiers opened fire on a Palestinian car, killing three Palestinian workers, was a freak accident and an error of judgement. But we in the Arab World know differently. We know the Israeli soldiers who fired upon the Palestinians did not stop for a moment to think whether they were doing the right thing because they knew very well they would not be subject to any disciplinary action. Sure enough, they were freed after routine questioning, which for all intents and purposes, we are well aware, is nothing more than "going through the motions."

It is clear to us in Jordan and other parts of the Arab World that a majority of Israelis apply a Nazi-like approach towards the Arabs.

But do the governments and people of Europe and the

U.S. who extend massive and unconditional support to Israel, whose people they see as victims of Nazism, aware of that reality?

Our experience shows that Israelis are dealing with the Palestinians no differently than the way Hitler's soldiers dealt with "non-Aryans." The similarities are many: the concentration camps, which Israel calls prisons, including the infamous Khiam camp in Lebanon; the many "detention" centres in Israel; and state-approved torture of Palestinians at the hands of Israeli soldiers.

It is against this backdrop that we need to look at the half-hearted efforts some Europeans and Americans are trying to exert to revive the peace process. British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, unveiled what many see as a grand initiative to advance the quest for peace in the Middle East, but we know that it is not going to get anywhere. Perhaps Cook's sole objective behind the "initiative" is to show the rest of the European Union and others that Britain genuinely wants peace in the Middle East. Genuinely wanting is one thing, but wanting genuine peace is different. We cannot but express indignation that Britain, some others in Europe, and of course the lord and master, the U.S., are clearly telling

us that Arab-Israeli peace would be and has to be on Israel's terms — terms that are unjust and naturally serve to further only the Jewish state's interests.

We were encouraged a few months ago by signs that Washington was slowly realising that the intransigence of Israel was behind the deadlock in the peace process, and that if anyone has to be pressured it has to be the Israeli government. But such indications were short-lived. Recent affirmations that Washington has no proposal to revive the peace process are a clear message that the Clinton administration has no intention of pressuring Israel into accepting international legitimacy as the basis for negotiations with the Palestinians.

The upshot of all these facts is that the Arabs have given up all hope that the peace process could be advanced in real terms as long as the present regime in Israel remains in power. All grand initiatives and proposals are not going to make the slightest difference to the Israeli government of Benjamin Netanyahu.

Let us accept that reality and act accordingly, and freeze all movement in the peace process until Netanyahu fades into executive oblivion in Israel.

But, in the meantime, humanity demands an end to Israeli brutality and massacres of Palestinians.

Indonesia: The beginning of the end?

By Gwynne Dyer

"LET THEM eat cake," said Marie Antoinette, queen consort to Louis XVI, when told that the French common people had no bread. Or maybe she didn't really say it, but that was the story, and it summed up the French court's attitude — so when the revolution came, they cut off her head too.

"As an individual, as a group, some of us may live an affluent life," said Indonesia's President Suharto on being unanimously re-appointed to a seventh five-year term of office by a hand-picked assembly of 1,000 people on March 10. "But as a nation, we can no longer afford to lead an extravagant life."

It lacked the brevity of Marie Antoinette's remark, but it conveyed the same message, for no one imagined that Suharto or any of his large and extravagant family would be cutting back on their own consumption. It may lead to roughly the same conclusion, too.

As the 76-year-old Suharto was sworn in in Jakarta, 10,000 students were chanting "Bring down prices! Bring down Suharto!" in the old Javanese capital of Yogyakarta. Out of 202 million Indonesians, there can be only a few million (apart from his immediate family) who actively want Suharto to have another term as ruler of the world's fourth-largest country.

As long ago as November, the elite was talking obsessively in private of how to persuade him to retire gracefully. If he hangs on too long, he could drag them all down with him. But nobody dares to raise the subject with Suharto, and so the whole country continues to sleep-walk towards what most

people think will be a disaster.

Over half a million people were killed the last time the government changed hands, when Suharto took over from Sukarno, Indonesia's first president, in 1965. Most victims belonged to the relatively prosperous Chinese minority (about 3 per cent of the population) — and as the current economic crisis deepens, Muslim mobs are again targeting Chinese shop-keepers in villages all across Java.

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obsessively in private of how to persuade
[Suharto] to retire gracefully.

"The worrying thing for us is not so much the (Indonesian) economy," said Singapore's Minister for Industry George Yeo last week, "but the political and strategic implications." A European banker in Singapore spelled it out more clearly: "There's been some wild talk about 'hordes' of boat people invading Malaysia and Singapore if Indonesia collapses, but now it doesn't seem so wild."

The Indonesian crisis began as part of the general South-East Asian financial panic. But whereas the region's other crisis-struck countries — Thailand, the Philippines and even to some extent Malaysia — are democratic countries with free media and independent institutions, Indonesia is not.

Suharto has been in power almost as long as Fidel Castro — and by an amazing coincidence all six of his children have acquired business interests in Indonesia that make them dollar billionaires. Suharto's personal

wealth is about equal to the whole International Monetary Fund (IMF) bail-out for Indonesia (\$43 billion), and the wider "family" of children, cronies and hangers-on control up to 20 per cent of the national economy.

Suharto signed the deal with the IMF last October because Indonesia's currency, the rupiah, was disappearing down the drain at the time. But its terms require reforms that would destroy the business empires his

minimises IMF influence. He came up with the idea of a "currency board" that would peg the rupiah at the optimistic rate of 5,000 to the dollar (it has fallen from 2,500 to 11,000 on the free market since July). It would be a neat idea if it worked — and incidentally it would save the family's fortunes.

But Hanke is literally the only economist of repute who believes a currency board will work. If it fails after a couple of weeks, then the rupiah will go into free fall. Even now, tens of millions are out of work, 90 per cent of Indonesian companies are technically bankrupt, and prices are up 400 per cent. After the failure of yet another attempt to stabilise the economy, things could get really serious.

Indonesians have been robbed, patronised, and frightened into submission by their political elite for decades, but tens of millions of them understand exactly what was behind it all. The question now is not so much if or when Suharto will finally be forced to quit — he will be, and probably this year — as to how?

"Will it be a military coup, pressure from the streets, or a combination of the two? Will it be largely non-violent, like most other recent changes of regime in the region, or a bloody re-run of 1965? And will it produce democracy or a new dictatorship?"

Nobody knows for sure, but those recent regional precedents are encouraging. There is no good cultural, economic, or historical reason why Indonesia should not follow in the footsteps of the Philippines and Thailand, which both made the transition to democracy non-violently despite great difficulties. Besides, the alternative in Indonesia is almost too horrible to contemplate.

Reactions to Israeli killings of Palestinian workers warn of new intifada, violence

REVIEWED BY
ELIA NASRALLAH

THE LOCAL dailies this week tackled the latest Israeli massacre in the occupied Arab lands, Israel's intransigence on the peace talks front, the situation in Iraq and domestic affairs.

Al Ra'i's Raja Al Issa said the killing of the Arab workers on their way home last week reflects the deep hatred Israeli forces harbour towards the Palestinians. Sentiments of hatred and extremist actions on the part of the Israeli troops and Jewish settlers are driving them to invite counter actions from the Palestinian citizens who responded by renewing the intifada, said the writer. If Netanyahu wants to tell the world that he is bent on killing Palestinians to subdue their will and accept Israel's terms for a settlement, he is working totally against this end and is triggering a new conflict, the writer continued. The writer said not only have the Jewish invaders occupied Arab lands and homes and imposed a siege on the remaining Palestinians, but they are now shedding their blood and intimidating them into accepting Israel's dominant power in directing their destiny.

A writer for Al Ra'i said the Israeli forces committed their crime against the Arab workers on the same day when HRH Crown Prince Hassan was addressing Israelis and urging them to implement U.N. and Oslo accords to reach a settlement with the Palestinians. Sultan Hattab said that perhaps by killing the three Palestinian workers, Netanyahu wanted to send a message to the Palestinian people that Israel

will only use the language of bullets in dealing with them. He said it could be that Netanyahu wanted to send a clear message to Jordan that Israel will use the language of force in its bid to impose an Israeli-style peace on the region. By the killing of the three workers, said the writer, Netanyahu is placing Arafat in a very difficult situation: facing the Israeli occupation forces who are trying to impose Israel's will on the Palestinian people and facing the growing demand on the part of Palestinian extremist groups trying to revive the intifada. The writer said Netanyahu is trying to force Arafat to either resign or give the order for a new intifada in the Palestinian territories.

Hardly a day passes without an Israeli crime being committed against the Palestinian people, said Daoud Qarnah, a writer for Al Arab Al Yawm. The continuous killing of Palestinians is bound to force the Arab people of Palestine to resort to terrorist attacks on the Israelis, according to the writer who cited Israeli Labour Party leader Ehud Barak as saying that had he been a Palestinian he would have become a terrorist. While Netanyahu, during a joint press conference with Prince Hassan in Tel Aviv last Tuesday, was telling the world that Israel is seeking peace and security in the Middle East his forces were firing on Palestinian workers, the writer pointed out. He said Netanyahu has claimed that his government was keen on peace with the Arabs, but he failed to say at the press conference that it was Israel and Israel's inhuman practices and its occupation of Arab territories that had caused the Arab-Israeli conflict which has lasted for more than

half a century. Riyadh Hroub of Al Arab Al Yawm described Israel's offer to withdraw its forces from southern Lebanese territories as a declaration of failure and a way to escape the inferno where Lebanese resistance forces have been killing occupation troops. Netanyahu has realised that his forces' presence in southern Lebanon is a cancer that is eating up the Israeli society and causing suffering to Israeli families, Hroub said. Despite its sophisticated weapons and its formidable tanks and warplanes the Israelis have failed to subdue the Lebanese resistance which has demoralised the Israeli troops and the Israeli society alike, he added. The writer said Israel understands the language of force, which is what has compelled its leaders to confess their failure and eventually give up the occupied Arab lands. He said all Arab countries surrounding Israel should follow the example of the Lebanese resistance which has obviously triumphed over the aggressors.

THE
WEEK
IN PRINT

Israel has suddenly declared that it accepts U.N. Security Council Resolution 425 which calls for its troops to withdraw from southern Lebanon, said

Tawfiq Abul Rub, a writer for Al Ra'i daily. But Israel's leaders are placing conditions on their withdrawal saying that Lebanon must pledge to protect Israel's northern borders although such a condition is not stipulated in the U.N. resolution, the writer pointed out. He said Israel's presence in southern Lebanese territory is a violation of international law and defies the demands of the world community. What motivated Israel to declare its desire to withdraw, said the writer, is not a desire to reach peace with its northern neighbour but to save the lives of Israeli troops bogged down in that area. But, he said, such a withdrawal does not put an end to the attacks by Hizbollah, a religious resistance group intent on continuing its fight to liberate Jerusalem from Israeli occupation.

Netanyahu's tour of four European capitals recently was aimed at winning Europe's support for his offer to withdraw from Lebanon on certain conditions, said Mohammad Kharoub a writer for Al Ra'i. He said the tour was aimed to thwart the European nations' proposals for ending the deadlock in the peace process, urging Israel to respect its commitments and the Oslo accord by withdrawing from the Palestinian lands. The writer said it is clear that the Europeans do not support Israel's plans of limited redeployment of forces in Palestine and that they are not concerned with exerting pressure on Beirut and Damascus to accept Israel's conditional proposals for a withdrawal from Lebanon. He stressed that Netanyahu has no alternative but to face the moment of truth and end Israel's occupation of the Arab territories and implement

the Oslo accords if Israel is to enjoy real peace.

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek said His Majesty King Hussein's bid to arrange for a dialogue between Baghdad and Washington did not come out of the blue, but reflected the real desire of the Iraqi leadership for such contacts. At the same time the Americans who massed formidable forces around Iraq have realised that aggression cannot solve the problem and hence a dialogue could do the trick, said the writer. Now that the prospect of aggression has been minimised and Iraq is open for dialogue and committed to the Iraq-U.N. agreement in full, the way is paved for the King to pursue his peace endeavours which he had begun through visiting Gulf states, according to the writer. Furthermore, the King's initiative serves as a clear message to the world community in general and the Arab World in particular that they should think seriously of ending the sanctions on Iraq.

A writer for Al Ra'i daily said the municipalities in Jordan continue to face mounting debts and are in no position to deal with the issue. Nazih said that although efforts are underway to merge municipal councils, the plan will not solve the real problem of debts. The government has been trying to modernise the municipal councils' performance but this also does not help the councils overcome financial problems which are impeding improved municipal services and municipal projects, he added. He suggested that the government allocate part of the real estate tax revenues to the local councils which are overburdened not only by the original debts but also interest to be paid on them.

Iraq's children cling on for a grim life

The in-tray that holds horrors of deprivation

By Robert Fisk
In Baghdad

A VISIT to Philippe Heffinck's office is a grim business. Not because of the feral children prowling through the garbage round the corner. Certainly not because there's anything wrong with the UNICEF office in Baghdad, a block of former apartments whose soft carpeting and subdued telephone bells could be a government department in Mr. Heffinck's native Belgium. Coffee is served piping hot, with plenty of milk and sugar.

Even the files on Mr. Heffinck's desk have about them an anodyne quality. "The 1996 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey" doesn't indicate much pain. "Nutritional Status Survey at Primary Health Centres During Polio National Immunisation Days" gives an almost positive gloss to Iraq's deterioration. But dig through the contents of these white-covered documents and listen to Mr. Heffinck's cold, analytical words, and you realise that Iraq's children are going through hell.

"We have found that chronic malnutrition stands at 31 per cent for children up to five-years-old," Mr. Heffinck says in a deceptive monotone. "That accounts, in the whole of Iraq, for 1.1 million children, including the Kurdish areas. This is a serious problem — particularly serious when you have chronic malnutrition up to two-years-old, because that is the period when the brain is formed. You become stunted. There is a lack of physical and mental growth that will afflict the child — his

schooling, his job opportunities, his chances of founding a family and quite possibly his or her offspring as well."

All this was said with the curt politeness of a civil servant, of a U.N. bureaucrat going through his statistics. And one could not but reflect on what this represents. While the U.N. inspectors are neutering Iraq's weapons programmes — and with good reason — the same organisation is imposing sanctions that are crippling the country's children. Of course, Saddam Hussein is to blame — Saddam is always to blame. But it is we who are imposing the economic blockade on Iraq, and it is Mr. Heffinck — on our behalf — who is drawing up these dreadful statistics.

"People think," he goes on, "that with more food

to 35 per cent contamination. Because it's not just the water-treatment plants that need repairing in Iraq but the pipes as well. Then you have the lack of electricity that contributes to the deterioration in health."

I already understood the revolting mechanics of electrical power and water; a U.N. hygiene official had explained it to me, equally coldly, 24 hours earlier: when electricity is cut — which it is every three hours, for example, in Basra — the pumps stop and the pressure in the leaking water pipes falls. Into the vacuum is sucked sewage which runs out of the taps. Even the original source of the water is now contaminated in Iraq.

"There should be 5,000 tonnes of garbage collected in Baghdad everyday," Mr. Heffinck says. "But

water is pumped for drinking. In Baghdad, only 30 per cent of the population is connected with a sewage system — the big majority use septic tanks which don't work well in a shallow water-table like this.

"But now many mechanical septic-tank emptiers are not working due to lack of spare parts. So people are forced to empty their tanks into the drains; and this is one cause of diarrhoea diseases and typhoid fevers among children. You have a lack of electricity, a lack of clean water and a lack of environmental sanitation: the relationship between these three is a deadly combination."

Those files on Mr. Heffinck's desk with their white covers tell the story with great clarity. A child who is malnourished cannot fight diseases; thus the large increase in the number of diarrhoea cases — on average, every child in Iraq suffers 3-15 episodes of diarrhoea each year. But in the past, a child entering hospital with diarrhoea had only a one in 600 chance of dying. Now one in 50 children are dying from curable diarrhoea.

The statistics seem endless. Cereal production has fallen from 3.5 million tonnes to 2.2 million, contributing to child malnutrition, which in turn leads to disease and poor school attendance. Every child between six and 11 used to attend school. Now only 63 per cent of that figure turns up for class. Mr. Heffinck is not a man to make comparisons, but it doesn't take long to work out the implications of his figures, the 1.1 million chil-



A young girl leans out of a slum window in the Dour Sheoun area of Basra (photo by Robert Fisk)

dren with chronic malnutrition, the 330,000 with acute malnutrition. Researchers are finding that the kwashiorkor cases turning up in their hundreds in Iraq's hospitals: the degree of malnutrition in

Iraq is about equal to that of Zaire. But the explosion in child cancer that has followed the 1991 Gulf war is a subject about which Mr. Heffinck and his col-

leagues refuse to make any comment, even though they admit they have heard talk of depleted uranium shells causing leukaemia. And not once does child cancer feature

in those white files. Now isn't that an odd fact?

— The Independent

"People think that with more food and medicine, things are going to work better. But the quantity of available water has decreased by 50 per cent and the quality of water has deteriorated in some Iraqi governorates to 35 per cent contamination"
— Philippe Heffinck
UNICEF, Baghdad

and medicine, things are going to work better. But the quantity of available water has decreased by 50 per cent and the quality of water has deteriorated in some Iraqi governorates

the capacity available is only 3,500 tonnes — because sewage treatment plants are not functioning properly. So very often the overspill is dropped in the river — from which

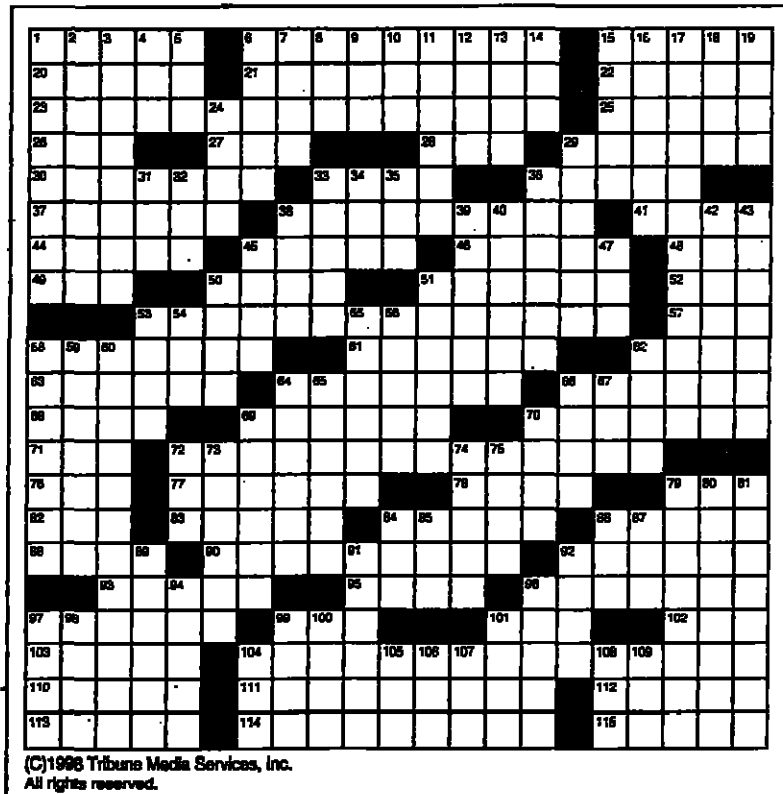
The Saturday Crossword

ON THE WAY DOWN

By Josiah Breward, Scranton, Pennsylvania

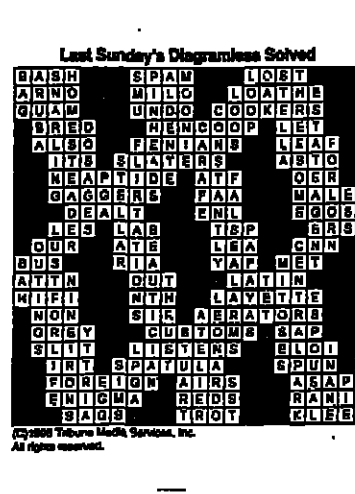
- ACROSS**
- 1 Roof's overhang
 - 6 Product pitch
 - 15 Baked dessert
 - 20 Reaked
 - 21 Animated film of 1937
 - 22 Get out of bed
 - 23 American waterfowl
 - 25 Segment of a flower
 - 26 Mohammad's son-in-law
 - 27 Smash on Broadway
 - 28 Word ignored by alphabetizers
 - 29 Writing implement
 - 30 Ardent love
 - 33 Merchant's goal
 - 36 Duchess of York
 - 37 Under control
 - 38 Companions of chips
 - 41 Youngest son of Adam
 - 44 Goblet elements
 - 45 Old-fashioned epithet
 - 46 Overseer
 - 48 Gun lobby, briefly
 - 49 Frenzied
 - 50 Old-west lawman
 - 51 Double-edged sword
 - 52 Big CA
 - 53 Caravan part of Niagara
 - 57 Equal prefix
 - 58 Author of "A Perfect Spy"
 - 61 Changes
 - 62 Abbr. in airport names
 - 63 Skirt styles
 - 64 Neptune's spear
 - 66 Strangled
 - 68 Greek letter
 - 69 Pulchra
 - 70 Tops to go with skirts
 - 71 "The Joy Luck Club" author
 - 72 Outdoor urban staircases
 - 75 Ump's cohort
 - 77 Wood snail
 - 78 "American Gothic" painter
 - 79 Bit of butter
 - 82 Numero
 - 83 The Velvet Fog
 - 84 Shrimp in SoHo
 - 86 Biblical queen
 - 88 Small ornamental button
 - 90 Eye's output
 - 92 Empty spots

- DOWN**
- 1 Daydreaming, e.g.
 - 2 Mythological female runner
 - 3 Disappeared
 - 4 Letter carrier
 - 5 Latin music
 - 6 Polio vaccine developer
 - 7 Art school subj.
 - 8 French lake
 - 9 Fruit: abbr.
 - 10 Universal mess.
 - 11 Draw light
 - 12 Writer Sholem
 - 13 Similar to
 - 14 Egyptian souls
 - 15 Frolic
 - 16 Sports venues
 - 17 Where dishes are gone
 - 18 Mores of "Bad Boys"
 - 19 Move
 - 20 Ulla horse's hooves
 - 21 Delicate hue
 - 22 Deceptive Spade
 - 23 Eastern winery
 - 24 Ginger cookies
 - 25 Assistance
 - 26 Aimee, NM
 - 27 Ruins
 - 28 Fictitious creature
 - 29 Overwhelm with noise
 - 30 Bound
 - 31 Bestow
 - 32 Social member
 - 33 Lloyd and Arlen
 - 34 Facility
 - 35 Pause filters
 - 36 Does wrong
 - 37 Check results
 - 38 Mandrake of tennis



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- rhyming sections**
- 84 Censor starer?
 - 85 Fishing pole
 - 86 Healthy spot
 - 87 Possessed
 - 88 Rye grass
 - 89 Laundry machines
 - 90 Alphabetize
 - 91 Rose or Rigg
 - 92 Touches down
 - 93 Toll
 - 94 One of HOMES
 - 95 Sheet of glass
 - 100 Bus, letter abbr.
 - 101 Sorrows
 - 104 Dampen
 - 106 Artisan people
 - 107 Bleacher bum
 - 108 Summer hrs.
 - 109 Elbowroom, casually



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Violence in families: Closer look at genes and rising divorce

By Jane E. Brody
The New York Times

NEW YORK — A woman's live-in boyfriend murders her child fathered by another man. A woman neglects her young stepson and punishes her so viciously that she dies. A stepfather sexually abuses his wife's daughter by a former husband.

As these examples drawn from news articles over last year demonstrate, the Cinderella story is hardly a fairy tale. Researchers are finding that the incidence of violence and abuse is vastly greater in stepfamilies than in traditional families in which the children are biologically related to both parents and to one other.

Of course, most stepfamilies do well, despite potential stresses. And plenty of families in which all the children are the progeny of both parents are fraught with violence and despair. But stepfamilies are at much higher risk than are traditional families. For example, Dr. Martin Daly and Dr. Margo Wilson, evolutionary psychologists at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, found that the rate of infanticide is 60 times as high and sexual abuse is about eight times as high in stepfamilies than it is in biologically related families.

The matter is especially pressing now when rates of divorce and remarriage are at an all-time high.

Traditional sociological explanations for abuse and conflict in stepfamilies have focused on issues like economic stress, low socioeconomic status and emotional instability. But evolutionists say these are only proximate, not ultimate, causes of the difficulties that sometimes arise in stepfamilies. The underlying trigger, the evolutionists believe, lies within our inherently selfish genes, which are biologically driven to perpetuate themselves. Genetically speaking, stepparents have less of an

investment in unrelated offspring and may even regard them as detrimental to their chances of passing along their own genes, through their own biological children.

Genetically speaking, stepparents have less of an investment in unrelated offspring and may even regard them as detrimental to their chances of passing along their own genes, through their own biological children.

Citing examples among animals — from birds and bees to lions and baboons — that share our propensity to live in family groups, the evolutionists maintain that conflicts and incestuous relations are more common among stepparents and stepchildren and among children and their half-siblings and stepsiblings because they are less closely related to one another than are parents and children in a traditional family. In fact, Dr. Daly and Dr. Wilson found that when a degree of genetic relatedness is taken into account, the role that economic stress plays in problems common in stepfamilies becomes almost negligible.

"There's a lot of violence involving step relatives that can't be explained in

terms of poverty, maternal youth and other commonly cited factors," Dr. Daly said.

Dr. Stephen T. Emlen, evolutionary biologist at Cornell University in New York state, maintains that a dearth of shared genes is the unconscious force that underlies many of the difficulties encountered in stepfamilies. These problems involve not only conflicts, violence and incest but also guilt and hurt that can result when stepparents do not form a close bond with their spouses' children, with whom they share no genes.

Dr. Emlen believes that over the course of several million years, the forces of evolution have selected behaviours within families that foster the perpetuation of the family genes. He asks, for example, whether men are really so different from, say, male lions; when taking over a new family, the male will kill any offspring still present from the female's prior matings.

In a paper recently published in the journal *Social Science Information*, he wrote, "Conflicts are intensified in stepfamilies because stepparents are unrelated to offspring of the previous pairing, and extant offspring are less related to future young of the new pairing." Dr. Emlen, who has spent 20 years studying animal family systems, says this is as true of Homo Sapiens as it is of lower animals that live in family groups, including wolves, mongooses, rodents, scrub jays, bee-eaters, wrens, ants, bees, wasps and termites.

He theorises that through the process of natural selection, our genes have provided a template for certain behaviours that foster their perpetuation through our biological offspring.

Sociologists tend to reject such intimations of genetic determinism, citing the fact that humans have minds that can override genetic forces, and they note the relatively low rates of abuse and other violence in families with adopted children.

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Wihdat recruit coach, sign 2 players before heading off to Jericho Tournament

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Kingdom's soccer champions Al Wihdat have already started their preparations for the upcoming season and will head to the Palestinian self-rule areas on Sunday to hold several matches with Palestinian teams.

Club's spokesman Khader Sowwan Friday told the Jordan Times that Al Wihdat's 30-man delegation will play their first match in Gaza against the city's team on the day their veteran goalkeeper Ma'moun Saq Allah will retire.

The team will then head to the West Bank town of Jericho where they will participate in a 10-day winter tournament, organised by Al Hilal Club.

The Jordanian team's visit to the West Bank is

not the first. It follows a series of visits by Jordanian soccer clubs, including Al Wihdat's rival Al Faisali who visited the Palestinian territories and played several matches there last year.

However, throughout their visits to the Palestinian self-rule areas, Jordanian teams refrained from playing any match against Israeli clubs.

In 1995, the Israeli Arab team of Kfar Kana visited Jordan and played against Al Wihdat — the first between teams from Israel and Jordan since the 1994 peace accord was signed between the two states.

As they prepare for their title defence, Mr. Sowwan said a new Iraqi coaches will arrive here to assume the position of head coach.

"Nizar Ashraf will be arriving here along with

goal keepers trainer Qasim Abu Hamrah on March 20," Sowwan said.

He added that the club's present coach Bader Al Khateeb will be assistant to the Iraqi duo.

Al Wihdat, who won three out of four major titles last year have signed a JD8,000 contract with Al Jazireh Club to allow forward Murad Hassan to join their lineup.

The club also decided to sign Al Arabi's Ra'fat Al Fahoum.

Al Wihdat's decision to sign the two players aims at overcoming the problem of lack of key strikers which was aggravated following the retirement last season of top striker Jihad Abdul Mun'ef.

Simone puts PSG into final

PARIS (AFP) — Two second-half goals from Italian striker Marco Simone sunk Lens and put Paris St. Germain into the final of the French League Cup Thursday.

PSG's 2-1 victory brought a measure of satisfaction to the Parc des Princes after recent disappointments which have seen the home side's title challenge fall away and Brazilian manager Ricardo pack his bags to quit at the end of the season.

PSG now play Bordeaux, who beat Auxerre on penalties on Tuesday, in the April 4 final in the new Stade de France.

But for the first 50 minutes it was all Lens and, with PSG again looking hesitant and uncomfortable, the visitors went clear eight minutes before the half-time whistle when Stephane Ziani slammed home from 20 yards after latching on to a neat ball from the left from Czech international Vladimir Smicer.

PSG finally found the net in the first minute of the second-half — but Florian Maurice clearly handled and was shown a yellow card for his effort. Simone then blew apart Lens with two goals in as many minutes — the first a 15 yard shot under the keeper from an inch-perfect pass from Franck Gava on the left and the second a half-volley from the edge of the box after a long through ball from Paul Le Guen.

The result was a bitter disappointment for Lens, currently second behind Metz in the league table.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Ajax move for Kinkladze

MANCHESTER (AFP) — Dutch League leaders Ajax on Friday made a move to sign Manchester City's Georgian international star Giorgi Kinkladze. "We have had a preliminary inquiry from Ajax," said City manager Joe Royle. "There has been no contact at all from the club, and the preliminary inquiry was made through an agent." "Gio, though, will play for us at Port Vale tomorrow. There has been no talk of a fee at the moment." Kinkladze has asked for a transfer from the English first division strugglers and City are believed to be prepared to cash in on their prized asset when they get the right offer.

Lombardo takes over Palace

LONDON (AFP) — Steve Coppell stood down as manager of English Premiership relegation strugglers Crystal Palace on Friday and former Italian international Attilio Lombardo took charge of team affairs until the end of the season. Coppell is moving to a new role at the club's director of football development with immediate effect. He will be assisted by Swedish international teammate Tomas Brodin. Lombardo, who joined Palace as a player from Juventus last summer, admitted the move was a "short-term measure" and that he would return to being a player when a new manager is appointed. Prospective chairman Mark Goldberg is still keen to bring in former England manager Terry Venables and will hold a meeting with him next week.

Evans hopes to keep Berger

LONDON (AFP) — Liverpool will fight to keep Czech international Patrik Berger when he returns from a break back home in Prague. Berger is wanted by Benfica, Roma and a string of Spanish clubs after an unhappy time trying to force his way into Liverpool's English Premiership side. Manager Roy Evans said Friday that he will attempt one last-ditch bid to persuade the 24-year-old to stay with the club. "There has been too much speculation," Evans said. "Whether that has got to Patrik's head I don't know. I don't want him to go. He is a special talent, and I want to keep good players."

Eindhoven in semis

THE HAGUE (AFP) — PSV Eindhoven reached the semi-finals of the Dutch cup on Thursday after they trounced Feyenoord 4-0. PSV Eindhoven, the reigning champions, join Ajax and Twente Enschede in the semi-finals of the cup. The remaining quarter-final match between Heerenveen and Fortuna Sittard will take place on March 31.

Seeds scattered in Copenhagen

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — Top-seeded Thomas Johansson of Sweden led an exit of three title favourites from the ATP event here Thursday when he crashed in three sets in the second-round to David Prinosil of Germany. Prinosil chalked up a 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 victory. Two other seeds also crashed out — third-seed Hicham Arazi of Morocco and fifth-seeded Filip DeWulf of Belgium. Arazi went down 7-5, 6-2 to Gianluca Pozzi of Italy and DeWulf was beaten 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) by home player Kenneth Carlsen. Other winners were fourth-seed Jan Siemerink, sixth-seeded Brett Steven of New Zealand and unseeded Frenchman Olivier Delaite.

Ginola to play for BBC

LONDON (AFP) — David Ginola will be going to the World Cup finals after all — even if he is not a member of the French squad. The 31-year-old Tottenham winger, who has been out of favour with French national coach Aimé Jacquet for the last two-and-a-half years, will join the BBC's World Cup television commentary team at the finals in France this summer. Ginola's decision would appear to end his bid to return to international duty in time to make Jacquet's squad. He said: "I'm delighted to join the BBC for the World Cup in France. I'm looking forward to a month of great football and enjoying my television debut."

Chelsea's Wise banned

LONDON (AFP) — Chelsea captain Dennis Wise was handed a two-match ban on Thursday by the English Football Association for collecting 11 yellow cards so far this season. Wise will miss Premiership games against West Ham and Derby, but will be available for the Coca-Cola Cup final and Cup Winners' Cup quarter-final second leg against Spain's Real Betis.

Iranians train in France

TEHRAN (AFP) — World Cup finalists Iran flew out to France on Friday for a two-week training camp they hope will help familiarise them with French conditions. The Iranians, coached by Croatian Tomislav Ivic, will play friendly matches against French first division teams Guingamp, Nantes and Montpellier during their stint in Europe officials here said. No Iranian team has played in France for close to 20 years. Iran, who edged past Australia to gain the last of the 32 places for France 98, are drawn in Group F in the first round and face matches against Germany, Yugoslavia and the United States.

Kluivert takes AC Milan to Italian Cup final

PARMA (AFP) — Dutchman Patrick Kluivert scored a priceless equaliser in the fourth minute of injury-time Thursday night, earning AC Milan a 2-2 draw at Parma and a place in the Italian Cup final.

Kluivert, who had also scored in first-half injury time, drove home the decider just when all looked lost for Fabio Capello's team.

AC Milan now meet Lazio in next month's final over two legs and their last move before the whistle provided a stunning finale to a match which had first swung Milan's way and then Parma's, before finally being decided on the away goals rule. The first leg had finished 0-0.

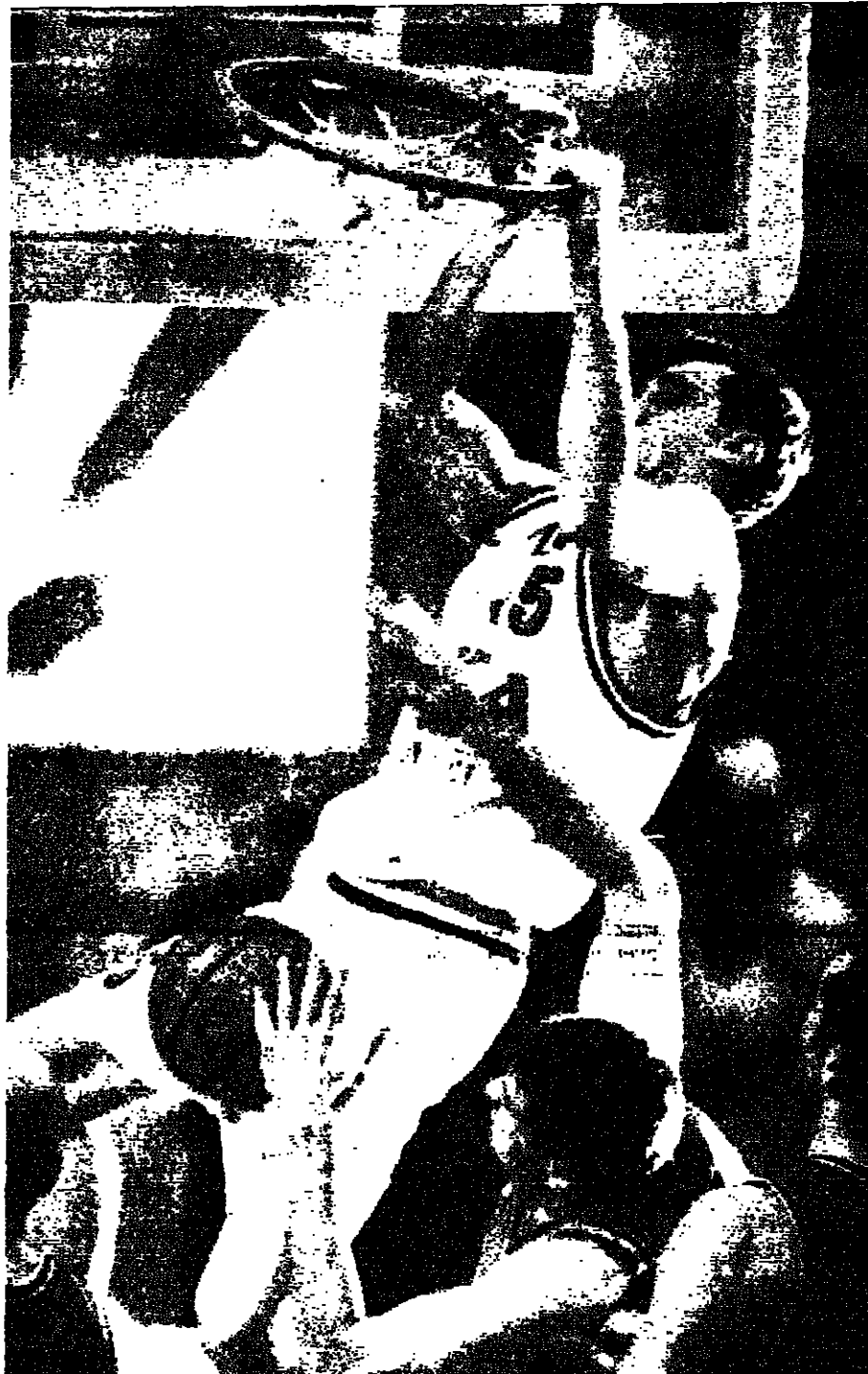
German defender Christian Ziege missed a 28th minute penalty, but teammate Kluivert made no mistake with his superb header.

However, Enrico Chiesa levelled for Parma in the 49th minute and Mario Stanic rose to head in what looked to have been a certain winner with 85 minutes gone and the home side in charge.

"We showed the spirit which we had for 10 years when we won everything," said AC Milan captain Paolo Maldini.

Croatian midfielder Zvonimir Boban added: "It was a great match with two teams who fought hard and didn't pull any punches. We may have had a bit of luck at the end, but it was a goal we had been looking for."

A satisfied Capello summed up: "We didn't deserve to lose and we turned the result around by our sheer determination. We played good football and we saw it through to the end."



Valeriy Daineko of CSKA Moscow slam dunks the ball during the first half of their Euroleague playoff match against FC Barcelona. Daineko led the Russian champions CSKA to a 88-76 victory over Barcelona (Reuters photo)

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Women's downhill off after Street crash

CRANS MONTANA, Switzerland (AFP) — The World Cup skiing season, disrupted by bad weather so many times this season, effectively petered out here Friday when Olympic Super-G champion Picabo Street broke her leg.

The 26-year-old American, who missed all last season because of a ruptured knee ligament, was flown by helicopter to hospital with a hairline fracture of the left leg.

She had been the second racer down in a women's downhill race, originally scheduled for Thursday, that was repeatedly put back because of fog.

The race jury decided it was unsafe to continue as mist crept in.

The cancellation meant Germany's double Nagano Olympic champion Katja Seizinger of Germany clinched the overall World Cup title.

She had a 267-point lead over fellow-German Martina Ertl and could no longer be caught in the last two races of the season — a



Austria's Josef Strobl clears a gate during his win in the World Cup downhill race in Crans-Montana March 13. Strobl clocked a time of 1:30.84 to win ahead of Switzerland's Didier Cuche and Austria's Fritz Strobl. The overall downhill World Cup was won by Austria's Andreas Schifferer (Reuters photo)

giant slalom and slalom to be raced this weekend.

Double Olympic champion Hermann Maier, who has already won the men's overall World Cup title and Super-G title, had opted to race only in Saturday's giant slalom when his biggest threat for that title is Switzerland's Michael von Gruenigen.

Both men's and women's Super-G races were cancelled because of the fog

UEFA's Johansson loses showdown

ZURICH (AFP) — European Football Union (UEFA) President Lennart Johansson lost his showdown with International football federation (FIFA) general secretary Sepp Blatter here Friday when FIFA president Joao Havelange ruled Blatter did not have to say whether he would be running for football's top job.

Havelange closed a stormy four and a half hour extraordinary meeting of the FIFA executive committee after Johansson and his European allies, who held the voting majority on paper, failed to force Blatter to reveal his intentions.

Blatter will now wait for the April 7 deadline to say whether he will stand against Johansson for Havelange's job.

Havelange strongly opposed suggestions Blatter should stand down as secretary general. He said he would draw up a list of what Blatter could and could not do and present this code of practice to another FIFA executive committee on April 8. But Havelange denied this meant Blatter was necessarily running.

Blatter will now wait for the April 7 deadline to say whether he will stand against Johansson for Havelange's job.

First Division Basketball Championship Jazireh remain unbeaten

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — While three matches remain in the opening round of the First Division Basketball Championship, Al Jazireh have taken the lead atop the standings and seem poised to retain the title for another season.

However, Thursday's match against Al Orthodoxy clearly demonstrated they will not have an easy path and fans will certainly enjoy more competitive matches especially with the top-three playoffs initiated this season.

Al Jazireh put in a big effort as they managed a 92-84 win over last year's third placed Al Orthodoxy who lost their first match of the season.

Former champions Al Ahli had lost to Al Orthodoxy 74-49. Al Jazireh play Al Ahli next Thursday.

Also this week, another interesting result was newcomers Al Jeel's 76-67 win over Al Hussein who have yet to score a win.

Al Jeel's second win came after they had beat last year's fourth placed Al Jalil 61-60 boosting their chances of remaining in the prestigious group for another season.

Al Hussein and Al Jalil will play on March 20 seeking to score a win that will give them the chance to avoid the relegation-threatened last-place.

The Jazireh-Orthodoxy match was

one that saw the champions leading and their opponents trying to catch up.

Al Jazireh led 43-35 before the lead was cut, but they still led 46-42 at halftime.

Both teams' players carried a big number of personal fouls in the second half as Orthodoxy's Hilal Barakat, Ayman Du'eis and Ashraf Samara were fouled out together with Jazireh's centre Ma'an Odeh.

Led by Yousef Abu Bakr and Naser Alawneh, Al Jazireh expanded their lead to 61-47 before a heroic effort by Al Orthodoxy's Fadi Saqqa, Ihab Msih and Nasser Bassam cut the gap to 64-62 for Al Jazireh.

The titleholders again took the lead at 76-69 but Al Orthodoxy again outscored them 7-2 cutting the lead to 78-76.

Now it was Al Jazireh turn to outscore 10-0 to lead 88-76 before winning the see-saw match 92-84.

Meanwhile, Al Ahli who have been struggling with technical and managerial obstacles for the past two seasons were still trying to get

the right combination while improving the physical and overall team conditioning resulting from relatively no serious pre-season training.

Having started training late while looking for a coach amidst the return of their star veterans to the lineup after two seasons, their incoherent lineup managed to beat Al Jalil 73-52 in their latest match.

Overall, titleholders Al Jazireh appear to be the favourites this year having prepared well during the West Asian Zone basketball qualifiers which they hosted last month amid preparations to retain the crown.

Al Jazireh's win last season ended a 30-year domination by rivals Orthodoxy and Al Ahli.

Al Orthodoxy had an undisputed reign from 1976-1989. Al Ahli won the title in 1990, 1992, 1993 and 1994 aided by the signing of Naser Bushnaq.

Al Orthodoxy came back to win in 1991, 1995 and 1996 and seem the season's serious contenders for the title.

STANDINGS

Team	P	W	L	SF	SA	Pts
Jazireh	4	4	-	354	240	8
Orthodoxy	4	3	1	325	239	7
Ahli	4	3	1	282	245	7
Jeel	4	2	2	250	287	6
Hussein	4	-	4	226	328	4
Jalil	4	-	4	213	311	4

Hamstring strain halts Graf comeback

INDIAN WELLS (AFP) — Just when Steffi Graf thought injury was behind her, she added a new one to the long list of ailments she has suffered during her career.

Graf retired from her semi-final match in the \$1.25 million Evert Cup with a strained left hamstring Thursday night, with Lindsay Davenport leading 6-4, 4-6, 4-2.

The victory put Davenport within one match of defending the title she won last year. She awaits the winner of Friday's second semi-final between World No. 1 Martina Hingis and eighth-seeded American Venus Williams.

Graf, 28, was playing in only her second tournament after taking nine months off recovering from knee surgery.

For months after the operation she didn't even know if she would return to competition, so she was delighted to get to the semi-finals here without dropping a set.

"It's like, what else?" said Graf, who has numbered a bad back, bone spurs in her feet and the broken cartilage and torn tendon in her left knee that forced the surgery last June among her injuries.

Thursday's hamstring strain was a new experience.

"This one I haven't had before," said Graf, who said she felt a sharp pain after a sudden movement in the fifth game of the third set.

She winced and clutched her thigh, but finished the game.

After having her thigh strapped during a medical time out during the changeover, she tried to play, earning a break point against Davenport in the sixth game even though she was clearly hobbled by

the pain.

"The minute it happened I knew," Graf said. "I always try. I almost made the game. I almost had a chance. But just standing there I was scared to make it worse."

Davenport was sorry to see the match end that way. "I think we played two and a half sets of good tennis," great tennis," Davenport said. "We were both trying so hard..."

Graf said she wouldn't call the tennis great — she made too many errors for that. But her serve and her slice gave Davenport fits in the second set.

"I was having a great time," Davenport said. "When I started to lose in the second set, she was coming up with some unbelievable shots."

"We played two and a half sets of great tennis... It's unfortunate it's going to be remembered for her getting hurt."

Graf, who has won 21 Grand Slam singles titles in her career and held the world No. 1 ranking for a total of 374 weeks, said she didn't know if she would be ready for the Lipton Championships in Key Biscayne next week.

"It depends how severe it is. Usually, if it's a strain, they say it's one or two weeks. So I think it's going to be cutting it close."

She said she wasn't sure if her lack of matches contributed to the injury.

"You know, I'm not very loose right now during my matches. So maybe just because I'm a little tight and nervous at times, I'm just not loose enough."

Austrian Thomas Muster, who defied medical predictions and returned to tennis after a devastating knee injury in 1989, said he wouldn't be surprised if Graf's long layoff contributed to the injury.

"I'm not a doctor," said

Muster, who upset world No. 1 Pete Sampras in the ATP Tour Champions Cup here Thursday. "But I would say it's pretty typical what happened to her, coming back after such a long break, playing a tournament which is more tense than any practice session, playing long matches. I think that's always difficult, especially for your muscles."

"That could be a reason for a muscle problem."

"But," added Muster, "I think coming back after such a long time, playing the semi-finals in the tournament, that's a great effort. I hope she will continue to believe in herself, that she can do it."

Davenport said Graf proved here that she still has the game to get back to the top.

"The way she's played, I thought she was definitely in the top five, playing great tennis," Davenport said. "Physically, it's going to probably be a bigger challenge."

Muster stuns Sampras to reach Champions Cup quarters

INDIAN WELLS (AFP) — Unseeded Austrian Thomas Muster stunned World No. 1 Pete Sampras 7-5, 6-3 here Thursday to reach the quarter-finals of the \$2.45 million Champions Cup.

The victory for Muster, a former World No. 1 himself, now ranked 20th, means Australian Open champion Petr Korda can take over the top spot from Sampras with a victory in the ATP Tour's first Super Nine event of the year.

Korda, the second seed, beat German teenager Tommy Haas 7-6 (8/6), 6-2 to reach the quarter-finals. Sampras wasn't the only giant to fall in the third round. Andre Agassi, who has painstakingly worked his way up to 40th in the world from 141st last November, ousted third-seeded Australian Pat Rafter, the reigning U.S. Open champion, 6-3, 3-6, 6-2.

But Sampras' defeat, by a player who had won just one of three matches all year, eclipsed that upset.

"I was awful," Sampras said. "I really struggled throughout the whole match. I had some chances in the first, had a set point. Had some love-30 points."

Sampras, who won the title here in 1994 and 1995 but lost in the quarter-finals in '96 and in the second round last year, said he still hadn't mastered the desert conditions.

"I don't know what it is about the conditions here," he said. "The ball just seems to fly on me. I can't play the way I want to play, can't swing the way I want to swing, and have control of the ball."

Sampras said his two titles here were won when the tournament used a heavier ball. Since the switch, he hasn't been able to adjust his timing. This year he came early to practice, and changed his racquet strings in an effort to improve his control.

"When I play the way I did tonight, I can only feel dejected," said Sampras, who had five double faults

and 26 unforced errors. "If you go out and play well, get outplayed. I can live with that."

Muster, who tussled with Sampras for the World No. 1 ranking in 1996, and grabbed the top spot for a total of six weeks that year, said he could tell Sampras was struggling.

"You always play like your opponent allows you to play," Muster said. "But definitely he wasn't serving as accurate as he used to. He made a lot of unforced errors. For whatever reason I don't know."

In the quarter-finals, Muster will face Ukrainian

Andrei Medvedev, who beat lucky loser Nicolas Lapentti of Ecuador 6-1, 6-4.

Korda will play seventh-seeded Chilean Marcelo Rios in a repeat of the Australian Open final. Rios defeated German Nicolas Kiefer 6-4, 6-3.

Sixth-seeded Briton Greg Rusedski advanced with a 6-3, 7-5, victory over Spain's Carlos Moya, setting up a clash with unseeded Swede Thomas Enqvist, a 6-2, 7-6 (7/2) winner over Bohdan Ulihrach.

Agassi will face the low-ranked player left in the draw, 126th-ranked wildcard Jan-Michael Gambill.

Gambill beat Jim Courier 6-2, 6-4 to advance to his third clash with Agassi in a month.

Agassi beat him en route to titles in San Jose, California, and Scottsdale, Arizona.

Agassi said his win over Rafter, who beat him in four sets on the way to the U.S. Open crown, provided a concrete measurement of his improvement since then.

"It's not even about revenge," Agassi said. "It's about showing that you've made improvements. There's only one way to see it, and that's playing against guys that were beating you."

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Iraqi FM urges U.S. not to 'sabotage' U.N. arms deal

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — Iraq is abiding by its commitments to provide full access to U.N. weapons inspectors and Washington should not "sabotage" the process, the Iraqi foreign minister said Thursday.

In an interview with AFP after four days of talks in New York, Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahhaf reiterated that Iraq no longer held any weapons of mass destruction sought by the U.N. arms inspectors.

He expressed confidence that the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) tasked with dismantling Iraq "will reach the same judgement" which should lead to the lifting of seven-year sanctions.

Mr. Sahhaf said he had informed U.N. Security Council members here that "we are in fact adhering to the MOU (memorandum of understanding) signed with the secretary-general, fully to the letter and spirit."

"Our request is to the other side, not to sabotage the MOU, not to spoil it," he added.

Asked whether he was referring to UNSCOM, Mr. Sahhaf replied, "I mean the United States of America. If they stick to professionalism, nothing will happen. All parties will be satisfied and the work will go on smoothly."

The Feb. 23 agreement signed in Baghdad by U.N. chief Kofi Annan and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz provides for Iraq to open up all suspect weapons sites to the U.N. weapons inspectors.

Mr. Sahhaf said that "the right way" to continue would be to continue with technical evaluation meetings (TEMs) on specific aspects of Iraq's suspected arsenal of weapons of mass destruction.

Two were held last month, focusing on special warheads

Senate calls for war crimes conviction of Iraqi leader

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. Senate, in an overwhelming 93-0 vote, approved a symbolic resolution Friday calling for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to be convicted by an international tribunal for war crimes.

The measure, a toothless "sense of the Senate" resolution, calls on U.S. President Bill Clinton to work with the United Nations to convene an international tribunal similar to those that followed World War II and recent hostilities in Bosnia and Rwanda.

The resolution calls for the creation of "an international criminal tribunal for the purpose of indicting, prosecuting and imprisoning Saddam Hussein and other Iraqi officials who are responsible for crimes against humanity, genocide and other violations of international law."

Senators said they were particularly peeved by President Hussein's effective propaganda campaign, noting a state-owned Iraqi newspaper called for the Iraqi leader to be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

"The only ceremony Saddam Hussein should attend is a war crimes trial, convened by the United Nations, sitting in judgement of a dan-

gerous unrepentant criminal," said Democratic Senator Byron Dorgan.

Republican Senator Arlen Specter said the Iraqi president "carried out a systematic campaign to destroy the Kurdish population in Iraq," noting Kurdish estimates that the death toll was between 50,000 and 182,000.

Gen. Specter detailed alleged Iraqi atrocities during the Iraq-Kuwait war of 1991, noting that an Amnesty International report "stated Iraq tortured or executed hundreds of Kuwaitis suspected of conducting guerrilla warfare against Iraqi forces."

He also cited a 1993 Kuwaiti report indicating Iraq sponsored an attempt to assassinate former President George Bush.

The resolution's smooth sailing is in contrast to one that is technically still under consideration supporting possible U.S. military action in Iraq.

That resolution is on hold because of the U.N. agreement to allow weapons inspections at suspect Iraqi sites and also because some senators favoured a more aggressive posture, calling on Washington to help topple President Hussein from power.

and VX nerve gas, and another is scheduled for March 20 in Vienna on biological weapons.

But Mr. Sahhaf stressed that Iraq would not provide more information to UNSCOM at the Vienna session, saying "we have provided UNSCOM with every bit of information."

"Let them verify it according to scientific, technical and professional way, and through the TEMs I think all parties will get the satisfactory evidence," he said.

Mr. Sahhaf was leading a delegation which held talks at U.N. headquarters aimed at ironing out problems holding up implementation of an expanded oil-for-food deal.

The U.N. Security Council on Feb. 20 agreed to raise the ceiling of Iraqi oil sales under

the humanitarian agreement from \$2 billion every six months to up to \$5.2 billion.

However while his delegation was conducting negotiations here, Mr. Sahhaf was lobbying U.N. Security Council members in what was described by Western diplomats as a public relations exercise.

He met with all but two of the 15 U.N. Security Council members. Mr. Sahhaf did not ask to see U.S. Ambassador Bill Richardson, and would have met with British Ambassador Sir John Weston, but he was ill.

Mr. Sahhaf, who met with U.N. Deputy Secretary-General Louise Frechette to wrap up the technical talks earlier Thursday, said that his del-

egation reached "a good understanding on policy points" on the oil-for-food deal.

He reaffirmed that Iraq would not be able to export more than \$4 billion worth of oil over a six-month period, even if the necessary repairs to the infrastructure were carried out.

He also noted that the U.N. Security Council would have to decide on a possible deduction in the amount paid in compensation for the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait under the expanded deal.

The higher ceiling of the oil-for-food arrangement comes into force when Mr. Annan has approved a new Iraqi distribution plan.

Mr. Sahhaf said he thought the new plan would be ready by the end of the month.

Israeli 'nuclear spy' ends 12 years of solitary confinement

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A technician jailed for revealing secrets of Israel's nuclear weapons programme has joined other prisoners on their daily walk, ending 12 years of solitary confinement, the justice ministry said Friday.

However, Mordechai Vanunu, being held in Ashkelon prison in southern Israel, is still under special restrictions, ministry spokeswoman Ety Eshed said.

"He is no longer separated from the others," she said.

Mr. Vanunu, 43, has refused to be transferred to a communal cell and will remain in his private cell, prison authorities said.

He is still regarded as a security prisoner, a category usually reserved for Palestinians. Visits, mail and telephone calls are strictly controlled and he faces other restrictions on his prison life.

Mr. Vanunu, a former technician in Israel's Dimona nuclear plant, was kidnapped by Israeli agents from Italy and sentenced to 18 years in prison in 1986 for revealing secrets of Israel's nuclear weapons programme to a British newspaper, The Sunday Times.

"He was extremely excited" by the walk, his lawyer Avigdor Feldman said.

"I haven't seen him so happy for a long time. He said he walked in the prison and talked to other prisoners. He felt like he had some bit of freedom," he told journalists.

"The decision came after

realising that it is completely inhuman to keep a man isolated for nearly 12 years," Mr. Feldman said. Authorities feared for his mental health and felt international pressure to ease his conditions, he said.

Mr. Feldman said he would present an appeal to accelerate Mr. Vanunu's release in a month, when the technician will have served two thirds of his sentence.

"I think it's not totally out of the question that he will be released," Mr. Feldman said.

His brother Asher Vanunu said his release would present no threat to Israel. "He no longer has any secrets. Anyway everything he said about the nuclear site was already known," he told Israel Radio.

Mr. Vanunu came from a modest Jewish family of Moroccan origin and worked at the Dimona plant in the Negev desert for several years before developing the pacifist ideas that led him to reveal the secrets of Israel's nuclear arsenal.

He fled to London where he gave the Sunday Times blueprints of the Dimona plant, including underground installations where nuclear warheads were manufactured.

He said the Jewish state possessed more than 100 nuclear warheads which could be mounted on Jericho type missiles.

After being lured to Italy by a female Mossad agent, he was kidnapped and shipped back to

Israel where his trial and conviction were held behind closed doors.

Since then his detention in solitary confinement has become a cause célèbre for anti-nuclear campaigners and human rights groups around the world, who maintain the punishment was both disproportionate and cruel.

1995 Nobel Peace Prize winner Joseph Rotblat called for Mr. Vanunu's release in 1996, saying his revelations had not harmed Israel's security in any way as the whole point of nuclear weapons was to act as a public deterrent.

But Israel has always been extremely sensitive about Mr. Vanunu and its nuclear programme and even Shimon Peres, Israeli prime minister in 1986 and later winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, insisted Mr. Vanunu had caused untold damage by giving legitimacy to Iranian and Arab weapons programmes.

Israel is evasive about its nuclear capacity, hiding behind the verbal formula that "it would not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons to the Middle East."

Israel has refused to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to allow outside inspections of Dimona, which was built in the 1960s with French help.

Foreign experts estimate Israel has around 200 nuclear warheads.

U.S. wants to help stem violence in Algeria

TUNIS (AFP) — The United States wants to help the Algerian authorities put an end to the bloodletting that has wracked the North African country for six years, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Martin Indyk said here Friday.

Mr. Indyk, on a tour of North African countries, said the U.S. wanted to see authorities in Algeria protect their nationals, and insisted that the security of civilians is up to the Algerian government.

More than 80,000 people have been killed since 1992, when the military cancelled elections the now-banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win.

Mr. Indyk spoke at a press conference wrapping up his 24-hour visit to Tunisia. He was expected in Algiers later Friday.

The U.S. envoy condemned Islamic extremists held responsible for the massacres, in which hundreds have been reported savagely murdered in overnight raids on isolated villages.

He said he had discussed the situation in Algeria during talks with Tunisian Foreign Minister Said Ben Mustapha and Defence Minister Habib Ben Yahia.

Mr. Indyk also deplored the current deadlock in the Middle East peace process and called on both Israel and the Palestinians to resume talks on a final peace settlement.

Regarding sanctions against Libya, the U.S. assistant secretary of state rejected the possibility of talks with Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi on the Lockerbie affair until U.N. Security Council resolutions are respected.

Last week, the U.N. Security Council decided to maintain six-year-old arms and air sanctions against Libya for failing to hand over two suspects wanted for the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jetliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, which killed a total 270 people.



Indonesian anti-riot police try to push a group of students during a protest at the Airlangga University in the East Java city of Surabaya on Thursday. Students in a number of cities on the main Java island protested against rising prices as well as calling for political and economic reforms (Reuters photo)

Cook to visit Abu Ghneim

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook will visit the site of the most controversial Jewish settlement project with a senior Palestinian official when he is in Jerusalem next week, British diplomats said on Friday.

They said Tuesday's stop at the hilltop site of Jabal Abu Ghneim, known in Hebrew as Har Homa, would allow Mr. Cook to see for himself one of the most sensitive issues that divide Israelis and Palestinians.

At the site on the edge of Arab east Jerusalem, Mr. Cook will meet Faisal Hussein, the official in the Palestinian National Authority responsible for Jerusalem.

"Our policy on settlements is very clear. Anywhere beyond the green line they are illegal," a senior British diplomat said.

The green line is the pre-1967 border between Israel and the West Bank including Arab east Jerusalem, which Israeli forces occupied in the 1967 Middle East war.

Peace moves between Israel and the Palestinians have been deadlocked since March last year, when Israel's right-wing government gave the go-ahead for work to begin on Jabal Abu Ghneim.

Mr. Cook will leave Britain on Sunday on a four-day tour of the Middle East. He will meet Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Tuesday morning in self-ruled Gaza and hold talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem later in the day.

Mr. Cook has said the tour, in Britain's capacity as holder of the European Union's rotating presidency, is intended to

breathe new life into the flagging peace process.

A six-point initiative he has drawn up includes a call on both parties to honour commitments made under interim peace deals and on Israel to halt all expansion of settlements.

Israeli officials had no immediate comment on Mr. Cook's plan to visit the settlement site. Israeli Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh, however, said Israel would not allow the EU to "dictate" the terms of peace moves. "Europe can contribute but not... dictate," he said.

Israel regards all of Jerusalem as its "united and eternal capital" and insists it has a right to build wherever it wants.

Palestinians regard Arab east Jerusalem as the capital of a future state.

China had secret nuclear deal with Iran — report

WASHINGTON (AFP) — China, only weeks after vowing to stop assisting Iran's nuclear programme, negotiated secretly to sell Tehran hundreds of tonnes of a chemical used to enrich uranium, The Washington Post said Friday.

The U.S. government found out about the deal and in top-level discussions with China last month apparently managed to stop the transaction, unnamed officials with access to U.S. intelligence told the daily.

U.S. officials said they are now confident the China Nuclear Energy Corp. in

Beijing will not deliver the chemical anhydrous hydrogen fluoride (AHF) to the Isfahan Nuclear Research Centre in central Iran.

However, the incident casts doubts over China's intentions as it moves towards arms control restraints, the daily said.

Some congressmen who were briefed on the affair in closed hearings believe China will continue providing nuclear assistance to Iran, a country blacklisted by the United States for its alleged support of terrorism, the daily added.

The secret negotiations flew

in the face of the U.S.-China nuclear energy agreement signed during the October summit here between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Chinese President Jiang Zemin.

Especially disturbing, some U.S. analysts told the daily, were talks between China and Iran of coming up with a cover story and to falsify "end user" documents to conceal the fact that the purchaser would be one of Iran's top nuclear institutes — AHF can also be used in the production of aviation fuel.

Turkish PM urges army to comply with democracy

ANKARA (AFP) — Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz urged Turkey's powerful pro-secular army on Friday to conform to democratic norms in the state's fight against Islamist extremism.

"We cannot give up democratic methods in fighting fundamentalism," Mr. Yilmaz told reporters during a flight to the neighbouring Caucasian republic of Georgia, according to the Anatolian news agency.

"If someone defends any method outside the state of law in fighting fundamentalism or terrorism, that one will become a third threat to the country after fundamentalism and terrorism."

His remarks came amid press reports that the army, which played a vital role in forcing an Islamist-led government to resignation last year, was not happy with the performance of Mr. Yilmaz's government in fighting Islamism.

Earlier this week, Deniz Baykal, leader of the left-wing Republican People's Party, raised the possibility of an "intermediate regime."

In Turkish political jargon, intermediate regime means a coup.

The Turkish army staged three coups in the last 38 years, in 1960, 1971 and 1980, with the pretext of protecting the

state from destructive movements. "Let no one abuse the fight against fundamentalism for his own struggle for power... Turkey is mature enough to stop the threat of fundamentalism within democracy," Mr. Yilmaz said.

The army has already criticised Mr. Yilmaz for lifting a ban on Islamic head scarves in religious schools and warned the government against making concessions to the Islamists. The Istanbul daily Yeni Yuzyl reported on Monday.

Jackson and Pavarotti to record duet

LONDON (AFP) — Pop star Michael Jackson and Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti are to record a duet they've written together which they'll sing for the first time later this year. According to Britain's daily Sun newspaper, they co-wrote "All I Can Give" and plan to put it on sale after a concert in South Korea in October. The paper said it was Jackson who approached Pavarotti with the idea. The song could well be a Christmas number one, it added.

Hussein Fahmy beats Omar Sharif for festival post

CAIRO (AFP) — A renowned Egyptian film director has been named the new head of Cairo's international film festival, heading off competition from other candidates including film star Omar Sharif. Hussein Fahmy, 57, takes over from Saad Eddine Wahba, a staunch anti-Israeli playwright who died in November. Fahmy's films include The Enemy Brothers, The Bullet is Still in my Pocket and Tutankhamen. The Egyptian press said Sharif, Egypt's best known actor, was among the candidates for the festival job.

Zhirinovskiy throws water in Duma

MOSCOW (R) — Outlandish Russian Nationalist politician Vladimir Zhirinovskiy threw water over fellow members of parliament after they tried to shut him up. Zhirinovskiy stormed to the speaker's platform and reached for the glass when deputies, weary of his harangues on an issue they had refused to discuss, demanded he return to his seat. "Get out of here," the maverick ultra-nationalist shouted, refilling the glass several times and spraying the deputies with mineral water set out for the Duma's ruling council. Zhirinovskiy is already notorious for tossing orange juice over liberal reformer Boris Nemtsov on live television and pulling a female deputy's hair.

MP wants condom machine in parliament

LONDON (AFP) — A Liberal-Democrat MP has called for condom machines to be installed in the "social" areas of Britain's parliament. "New, younger MPs of both sexes have, probably, brought more sex to parliament. But there is still no condom machine," Evan Harris, party spokesman on health education, told the HIV Alliance's magazine. He said he did not want people to think there was a "whole lot of promiscuity going on... And I don't want to imply it is happening in parliament itself... I just don't think all MPs are celibate. It's surprising in a place like Westminster, where thousands of people socialise, that the facility doesn't exist."

Women turned on by smell of candy, baby powder

CHICAGO (R) — Forget flowers and fancy chocolates. What really turns women on are the scents from candy-coated licorice, cucumbers and baby powder. Following up on his previous study on the odours that arouse men, Alan Hirsch of the Smell-Taste Treatment and Research Foundation in Chicago said he exposed women to odours and then measured their vaginal blood flow. He found the candied licorice smell, the odour of cucumber, and the aura of baby powder increased blood flow by 13 per cent. Scents that inhibited blood flow were cherries, charcoal-barbecued meat, and — disturbingly for scent manufacturers — men's colognes.

Netanyahu would beat Barak — poll

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Most Israelis think Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would beat opposition rival Ehud Barak in elections, according to a poll published here Friday.

The poll in the Yediot Ahronot newspaper comes just one week after Mr. Barak triggered fury in Israel by saying he would have joined a "terrorist group" if born a Palestinian.

When asked who would win if elections for the prime minister were held today, 44 per cent answered Mr. Netanyahu and 36 per cent said Mr. Barak,

said the poll. Mr. Barak has led Mr. Netanyahu in every opinion poll since taking over the Labour Party leadership in June last year.

In a poll three weeks ago by the Maariv newspaper, 42 per cent of the respondents called the Labour leader their choice for prime minister, while 35 per cent chose Mr. Netanyahu.

Mr. Barak outraged the political right and embarrassed his own party last week by telling a television interviewer: "If I were a young Palestinian, I

would choose to be part of a terrorist organisation."

The Labour leader quickly tried to correct the statement, saying he meant to express understanding of Palestinians' national aspirations and frustration with the deadlock in peace negotiations under Mr. Netanyahu.

He went on to condemn attacks by Palestinian activists that have killed scores of Israelis. Friday's poll included some 500 participants from all sectors of the population and had a margin of error of four per cent.